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Edward Peatrice

A  
SERIES  
OF  
FAMILIAR DISCOURSES  
ON THE  
APOSTLES' CREED,  
THE  
LORD'S PRAYER,  
AND  
*The Litany;*  
WITH A  
TREATISE ON CONFIRMATION  
AND THE  
SACRAMENT.

---

BY THE LATE  
REV. W. LANGFORD, D.D.

*Chaplain in Ordinary to his late Majesty, Canon of Windsor, and  
Under Master of Eton School.*

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TO THE

KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

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SIRE,

YOUR Majesty having graciously permitted me the honour of dedicating to Your Majesty this volume of Familiar Discourses, written by my late respected Father, on the most essential doctrines of our holy religion, I must ever consider such a mark of condescension as one of the proudest events of my life, and remember it with the most dutiful gratitude.

Your Majesty, by kindly honouring this publication with your Royal patronage, manifests a further proof of Your Majesty's peculiar benevolence of heart,

firm attachment to the Established Church, and to the important cause of religion, for which Your Majesty is so pre-eminently distinguished.

That the Almighty may grant Your Majesty a long and happy reign over a loyal and affectionate people, is the sincere prayer of Your Majesty's

Most Devoted and

Most Faithful Subject,

C. LANGFORD.

London,  
31 July, 1824.

## ADVERTISEMENT.



THE candour of the Reader is requested in perusing this volume of Discourses, which (with two exceptions, viz. “A Treatise on Confirmation” and on the “Sacrament,”) were delivered before congregations in the performance of the Author’s parochial duties in the country, and, on that account, written and compiled in a plain and unadorned style, and obviously never intended for general publicity.

The Editor flatters himself, notwithstanding, that they breathe the language of genuine piety, and the true doctrines of the Established Church, and in that respect may not be unworthy the kind patronage he has received, and for which he begs to express his grateful acknowledgments.





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THE  
BELIEF IN GOD.

—◆—  
ARTICLE I.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON I.

---

ST. MAT. xxviii. 19.

*Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Ghost.*

---

THE three Persons here distinctly named by our blessed Lord propose as many objects for the faith of Christians. The Union by which they subsist, and together are the Divine Essence, is to be gathered from the express and figurative doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. The manner by which this mysterious nature of the perfect God is thus combined, is not given man in his present state to explain to his satisfaction. Such knowledge is too wonderful for him, and sufficiently shows itself unattainable to the degree of understanding hitherto imparted to the mind, by the perplexities and conjectures of all who have presumed to

unfold it. It would be much to the happiness of mankind if they would humbly acquiesce in and profit by what they can know, rather than grasp at a substance which they have not the ability to reach : were there not pride in man, he would not search into the secret things (as Moses said) which belong only to the Lord our God.

It is my design, from this positive injunction of our Saviour, to vindicate the parts of that system of the Christian belief, the Creed, and to show what is meant by the three divisions of it ; faith in the Father ; faith in the Son ; and faith in the Holy Ghost.

The word *Creed* signifies a compendium of articles which are believed. Belief rests upon two foundations ; upon the testimony of God, and the testimony of man. The former is called divine ; the latter human. Both these constitute the authority of the form to which we assent when we publicly profess ourselves members of the Christian Church. This Creed bears the name of the

Apostles ; not because it was a summary of faith drawn up by themselves, but because it is in full agreement with their teaching. The posture in which this is required to be repeated, is designed to exhibit the readiness and resolution of all who believe to defend its doctrines ; and as soldiers at a post, determined to maintain it with all their might. It is usually pronounced with the eye of the repeater towards the eastern part of the heavens. This hath been by many considered a mark of idle superstition. It should be remembered, however, that our Church, building itself upon ancient usage, hath retained many forms indifferent in their nature ; but yet such as may impress the mind with an awful feeling, derived from emblematical representation. As the rising sun dispels the mists and gloom of the clouded or dark atmosphere, when the night is to close and the new day begin ; so does knowledge when it beams upon the darkened mind, remove the veil of ignorance and error.

The custom therefore of turning the countenance to the east when the Creed is rehearsed, hath nothing more in view than to show a sense of divine communications rising upon the soul with the same radiance as the dawn of light and heat upon the animal world. A practice having this only in its design cannot be called foolishly superstitious, as it is both innocent in itself and conveys the idea of grateful humility. I shall now proceed to consider the divisions of the Creed.

The first Article of Faith in the three Persons, as it most properly ought, is confined to what men are required and profess to believe concerning the existence and attributes of God.

*“ I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.”*

In this Article there is a profession of an inward persuasion, that there is a Being of a nature far removed from the imperfections of man, and possessing in himself properties or attributes peculiar to his own

exalted nature, communicable to no other but himself; that as he cannot be of the same condition as the human race, he is confined to no fixed spot of dwelling, nor to any parts of figure or body.

This was the just opinion of men who, in times of the greatest science and refinement, during the unenlightened days of reason, formed their idea of the Supreme Being. They considered Him as totally free from bodily incumbrance or matter; and, consisting of a sublime mind, unconfined by place or any circumscription of time. They pronounced Him as existing by an essence inherent in his own Person, for which no cause but that of necessity could be found; and possessed of qualities, the refined principles of which they could not define; but called it, from its pure and unmixed substance,—Spirit.

It was their doctrine, that this Spirit pervaded all things which presented themselves to their eye, whether they were seen in the vault of the regions above, or on the sur-



face of that lower dwelling in which they had their being.

Having no sure light to guide their wandering imagination, they naturally conceived that this Spirit governed what they beheld ;—the sun, the moon, and the stars, the great luminaries which divided day and night ; the face also, and productions of the earth and sea ;—and as changes of time brought about fruitfulness or barrenness at particular periods, they justly supposed that the same Spirit was instrumental in causing the different seasons.

When they turned their thoughts upon their own constitution, as consisting of powers to think, to utter, and to articulate sounds, which were denied to all other animals ; and as composed of bodily parts, wonderfully fashioned in their use for providing the means of life, and superior in upright form and beauty to the brute creatures, which bent towards the ground, and had no understanding ; they, not without cause, conjectured that there must have

existed, from countless time, a Spirit—the Author and Preserver of all.

Such was the imperfect, though reasonable notion, “that there was a superior and spiritual Being,” deduced from the light of reason or nature alone. It was reserved for that period, when it should be the pleasure of Him, who was thus darkly discovered by the reasoning of the wisest among men, to make himself clearly known by Revelation. This, like a ray of the sun, darted into a place of darkness, cast a new and reviving light ; this confirmed, indeed, what supposition had conjectured, but enlarged it into certainty.

The Being, whom the world had learned to exist from the appearance of what was visible to the sight, at length was manifested under the name of *God*. This communication expressly established the doctrine of his existence and providence ; of his perfect and spiritual nature ; of his having been from everlasting, both the Creator of the world itself, and of Man,

who was placed in a part of it, to be its inhabitant, and tiller of the ground. With a firm assent to the existence of this incomprehensible and perfect Being, the Creed of the Christian Church begins, “*I believe in God.*” To the Person himself is added his Attributes, comprehended under the next term—“*Father.*”

The character here expressed naturally results from the general acknowledgment, “that there is a God;” for to this conviction is necessarily attached the deduction, that He alone could bring all things which are seen in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, into being.

To a Person, the author of all, we assign, as using the same term in earthly relationship, the name “*Father.*” But, as with ourselves, the office of Father is two-fold, and implies preservation as well as creation; God is called Father, not only because he at first brought into existence, but because he governs and sustains what

he made ; because, whether the animate or inanimate parts of creation be viewed, he retains all his works in their fulness and glory.

To the name of Father is subjoined “ *Almighty*.” This term can be considered by no one, who professes “ to believe in God,” as unnecessary ; for the divine Being, from whom the world proceeded, and is daily preserved, cannot but have a just title to the honour and praise of men for his omnipotence. It was this attribute which directed the progress of his work from the first command, “ Let there be light,” to the formation of Man. It was this, as Moses has described in the Book of Genesis, which “ made the sun and the moon, and divided the day and the night ;” which “ separated the waters from the waters, by a firmament,” called by him “ Heaven ;” which “ gathered the waters together unto one place, and caused the dry land to appear ;” which “ commanded the earth to bring forth grass, herbs for

seed, and trees yielding fruit ;” which “ ordered the waters to produce living creatures, and caused the fowls to fly under heaven ;” which said to the earth, “ bring forth cattle and creeping things, and it was done ;” which “ made man after his own image, i. e. with a power of mind to have dominion over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every creeping thing which moveth upon the earth.” As an illustration of this boundless power, and the strongest proof that could be given of the stupendous manner in which it hath been invariably exerted, the phrase follows, “ *Maker of Heaven and Earth.*” For, when the human mind brings to its consideration the immensity of the created world, taking into its thought the greater and more massy parts of the composition, as well as the smaller and more weak joints of the grand machine ; when it contemplates upon the perfection of the most minute portion ; the beauty which no art can presume to imitate ; the strength which no violence



can materially injure ; the durability which no time nor accident can, for a moment, bring to nothing or disorder ; how can it but acknowledge the Fabric as raised by a hand of all power, and supported by an arm which nothing can weaken or overcome. The Heavens on high, with all their brightest glory, proclaim an Omnipotent Maker there ; and the earth, with all its productions, and man, its chief ornament, declares the handy-work of an Almighty Builder below.

It would be a theme for description, exceeding all power of words, or the suggestions of imagination, were an attempt made to speak, even in general terms, of the Great Creator, the Lord of Heaven, Earth, and Sea, the Father of the Universe. As his rule itself is boundless, so would be the subject, if weak man should presume to comprehend, much more to tell circumstantially of all which he hath done, and of all which he continues to do. The highest realms in the firmament re-echo all

praise, and the most remote corners among the dwellings of men resound to the glorious name, when mortals cry out, "Great is the Lord, and great is his power." The very depths of the bottomless seas hear with rapture the hymn, that "he is worthy to be praised," because, for his pleasure, they are and were created. Most of all, man, however imperfect his voice may be, joins in the universal song; and, as his grateful duty more strongly calls upon him, thanks his God, who formed him to think with his mind, to understand with his heart, and to speak with his tongue. In such a Being, whose dominion is over all things; whose majesty exceeds all thought; whose universal influence is witnessed by the operations of his creative hand; whose protecting bounty is experienced by the display of a particular providence, unfeigned belief is professed by every Christian. This is, as it were, the introduction to all religion, and the great hinge, upon which the system turns, of true homage and worship. As a



building cannot stand without a strong foundation, but when the winds and tempests shall blow must fall, so pretensions to religion must be weak, and all assumption of moral rectitude pass away, unless there be in the bosom of every man a true confidence, "that there is a God," the Father of all, and of infinite power, such as was exemplified by Him in the first raising and harmonizing a world, from a mass without form, and in keeping it undiminished through a succession of numberless ages.

The true Christian, in opposition to him who pretends that he disbelieves in any such cause of all things, who would rather subscribe to the absurd and unintelligible jargon of that sect, who presumed to say that the world, with all its symmetry of proportion, and compactness of parts, arose out of nothing, and united in the present fashion from an accidental meeting together of indivisible substances, makes the following declaration as the criterion of His faith :

*“ I believe, i. e. I assent to the doctrine that there exists, and ever hath done, a Being of immeasurable greatness, of immensity in operation, of duration eternal, which is called God. I believe that this God is the everlasting Parent of a world, which he raised from a confused heap of indigested matter, and the supporter of its frame by his providential care. I believe that the authority he claims and displays is universal, uncontrollable, and never to be diminished. I believe that he has given the most imperious testimony of his unequalled might in the first creation, and in the continual governance of every part and every being under him, whether I cast my eye to the firmament of Heaven, the face of the Earth, or the waters of the Sea.”*

It must have occurred, I conceive, to many in this congregation, that if the explanation here given be the true, a variety of duties must arise to believers, from a sense of their dependance upon so great and powerful a Father ; a Father who can

command their service, but yet wins them to obedience and reverential fear by his goodness. It cannot but be my wish to encourage such feelings, and therefore I shall conclude this discourse by suggesting to you a mode of self-examination upon so important a subject.

Are we creatures the inhabitants of an allotted space in the immense system of a world made by an Almighty Author? Is he, from whom we draw our breath, whose hand wonderfully fashioned our bodies, whose constant presence defends us from the attacks of premature decay, a God of transcendent and unspeakable power? Is his sovereignty over all things, and yet his benignant care exercised for the good of the very least thing which he hath made? Is he in his own nature a Spirit, and, consequently, not confined within the grossness of that flesh which depresses the race of men? Did he display the mightiness of his hand by creating the sun and moon, with all the stars of light? Did he send

forth his commandment, and the earth become fruitful? Did he say to the billows of the sea when they raged, "Be still," and they obeyed? Doth he continue to bless the works of his hands, and to preserve the regular course of things, according to their first appointment, by which we enjoy light and heat, refreshment in our bodies, and security from dangers? Doth he raise joy in our hearts, and bring peace to our souls? If so, what do we owe to him in return for our creation, the blessing of preservation, and the honour of enjoying a place in his works? If we believe him to be a *pure* and *holy Spirit*, it is incumbent upon us, in order to please him as far as shall be in our power, to be pure as he is pure. If we believe him to be *all-powerful*, it is our duty to think of, to speak of, and to act towards him with a humble fear. If we believe him to be *all good*, it must highly behove us to be thankful for his gifts. If he be *all-wise*, his dispensations are to be received with a lowly

sense of our own weakness. If he showed himself *great*, by giving a fashion and harmony to a new world, and by infusing life into some, and qualities of various kinds into other parts, so that we behold a perfect whole, magnificent, and above all thought and admiration, what do we owe?—The tribute of admiration, and never-ceasing praise.

Should we be backward in this homage, what must we be?—Senseless, undeserving, and unthankful.



WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THEM  
WHO PROFESS  
TO BELIEVE IN GOD THE SON,  
HIS SUFFERINGS, DEATH,  
AND BURIAL.

—◆—  
ARTICLE II.

—◆—  
A SERMON.





## SERMON II.

---

1 JOHN ii. 23.

*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.*

---

HAVING made it my endeavour to set before you, in a plain manner, what the *first* article of the Creed enjoins as the principal subject of belief, I am naturally brought to the *second*, and shall explain to you, in as familiar a way as it will admit, the several parts of that faith which we are supposed to be possessed of, when we profess to believe in “*Jesus Christ*,” and in “*Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord*.”

It should be understood, before any exposition be given of the different and distinct portions which compose this article, that the divine Person is represented by *two* names, expressive of two characters, *Jesus, and Christ*.

The former is designed to hold him forth to our view as the *Saviour* of Man, the latter as the promised *Messiah*. The word *Jesus* is of Greek derivation, and taken from a verb expressing healing, or saving. These two terms are promiscuously used, even by our Saviour himself, as signifying the same thing. Thus, when he healed a woman, he told her, that her faith had *saved* her. As *healing* is the means of restoration to the body, so is *saving* the redemption of the soul.

With the greatest propriety, therefore, did our Lord, as the Angel before his birth announced to Mary and the choir of the heavenly host when he was born proclaimed to the shepherds, bear this important name. The word *Christ* is also of Greek derivation, and signifies the *Anointed*. It was the custom, among the Eastern people, to consecrate, by pouring oil upon the head of the distinguished persons who were to be set apart for the high offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. Our

blessed Saviour, in the course of his ministry, was, by an extraordinary appointment, to appear in all these characters, and therefore was called *Christ*, or the *Anointed*. He did not receive, indeed, a formal anointing with oil, as Saul and David, from men; but he was authorized by a more special commission, represented under the same figure as his Baptism, when the Holy Spirit, causing the same waving motion in the air, as if it were visible, might be compared to the fluttering of a dove, with its clapping wings, alighted upon his head. The word Messiah, in the Hebrew, contains the same meaning.

The names *Jesus*, and *Christ*, being thus explained, I go on to the particulars of his wonderful character—" *His only Son, our Lord.*"

Mankind, in general, from the nature of their creation, and as fashioned by one Almighty God, the Father, are to be called his sons. But, in order to distinguish Jesus Christ from the common race of

men, he is emphatically styled God's *only* Son. It is to be collected from this significant title, that he is not upon the level of mortals ; and as having existed with his Father, consisting of *bodily* parts (these he afterwards assumed, that he might suffer for man in the same flesh), but partaking of that pure Spirit, and sharing in that divine and eternal *essence*, which cannot be communicated to any earthly creature. Thus God is represented, in the book of Psalms, saying, "Thou art my *Son*, this day have I begotten thee." At his Baptism our Lord received this testimony to his superior character : "This is my *beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased;" and, at his transfiguration, "This is my *beloved Son*, hear him !" Jesus also himself claims the same title : "The *Father* hath given all things to the *Son*." The doctrine might be supported with references of this kind without end. What has been adduced already may suffice to show that Jesus is to be acknowledged as the

*Son of God*, with the additional title *only*, because he alone, as the Nicene Creed more diffusely interprets it, is “*God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, i. e. by spiritual generation; related, not made, i. e. not as man created through another, but being of the same substance with the Father.*”

To this character of the only Son is subjoined “*our Lord.*” This expression, *Lord*, is inserted in the Creed to denote “dominion.” He who bears authority over dependants, and has a right to command service, is properly honoured with the address, “*Master.*” His power includes his protection, and supposes homage or respect due to him in return for his sovereignty. Thus men who are baptized into the faith of Christ are to him in the light of servants, and his rule exercised upon them is that of a master. He teaches, he directs, he comforts, and is therefore rightly called *Lord*; and we, who are enlisted as soldiers under him, for our guidance and



defence, acknowledging no other superior in the same degree of authority towards us, naturally denominate him, by way of eminence and peculiarity, *our*, or the Lord of Christians.

Having thus professed our belief in Jesus Christ, as more particularly marking his *divine* nature and relationship with God the Father, and the sovereign kingdom he maintains over the Christian Church, we proceed, in the Article of the Creed, to specify the particulars of our faith in his *human* nature, “*who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*”

The incomprehensible generation of our Lord, through the operation of the Spirit, is a mystery, or a truth wrapped up in inexplicable darkness, not to be discovered or demonstrated by the intellectual powers hitherto communicated to the sons of men.

As it was indispensable that he should consist of *two* natures, of *God* and of *man*, without which the redemption of the world could not, consistently with God's justice,



as well as his mercy, have been wrought, we, in our system of faith, embrace *both* the characters, and believe him to be God, as conceived by the Holy Ghost, and to be man, as born of a woman. As to the former, since it is hid from our sight, and the more it is presumptuously inquired into becomes the more undefinable, we can go no further than what is spoken to this effect by an inspired Prophet or Messenger from Heaven.

Isaiah, foretelling the birth of Christ, calls him by an especial name, "*Immanuel*." The interpretation of this word is "*God with us*," i. e. God came down in the fashion of man.

When the angel Gabriel communicated the tidings to his mother, that she should bear a son ; he told her "that the power of the Highest should overshadow her ! and that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God."

When Joseph, afterwards, not knowing

how to account for his espoused wife thus bearing a son, had thoughts of putting her from him, he was admonished by an angel in a dream, saying, "Joseph, fear not to take unto thee thy wife; for that which is conceived by her is of the Holy Ghost!"

The prophet Isaiah and the Gospel of St. Matthew thus attest what we cannot comprehend.

Not so involved in difficulty is the historical account "that he was born of a *woman*." This creates no doubts, as the ordinary occurrences of the same kind in the world make it no question. The only inexplicable circumstance is the character of his mother—a *virgin*. All that can be insisted upon here is, that she who was delivered of a son was in this respect answerable to what was written of her. Gabriel was despatched from Heaven to a person of this description, foretelling that she was highly favoured and should be a mother. The prophet Isaiah breaks out, "Behold, a *virgin* shall conceive!" and Jeremiah also

foretels the same event, but by a more obscure form of expression.

To the name *Virgin* is added *Mary*. It was long foretold that when the Messiah should come upon the earth he should arise from the family of David, and that God would give to him the throne of his forefather David.

St. Matthew, in order to show the truth of this prediction, and that Jesus was descended lineally from the stock of David, deduces the genealogy of his mother from that king, through a succession of fathers to the times of Mary, and concludes the whole with this assertion, “ of whom was born Jesus, who was called Christ.” The name Mary is therefore designed to fix the certainty of our Lord’s parentage. What hath been already remarked is sufficient to prove to you, that in the most minute particulars, even of his very birth, there is a precise agreement with prophecy and event. You can desire no greater argument for the continuance of your faith.

We come now to the serious exemplification of our Saviour's *human* nature, "our belief in the means of man's redemption—His sufferings."

*"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."*

That Christ underwent "suffering" requires no difficulty to show. The reader of his life, from the description he gives of himself, "that he had no place to lay his head," to the particular scenes of his agony in the garden; contempt and insult of the deriding crowds; condemnation before the tribunal of an unjust judge; the tortures of a scourge; the wearing of a crown of thorns; the striking of the soldiers; the mockery paid as to a king in a purple robe; the transfixing his feet with nails to a cross, (the torture of which drew from him these desponding words, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?") and last of all, when his painful dissolution approaching, he cried, "I thirst," and said "It is finished!" bowing his head, and

giving up the ghost. From all these taken together, I say the reader abundantly learns that Christ suffered. All that the prophet Isaiah described, in his giving “his back to the smiters;” in his exclamation, “I am broken in heart;” “I am full of heaviness;” “I looked for some to have pity on me;” or (as the Psalmist cries) “They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink;” was literally fulfilled in his suffering person.

“*He suffered under Pontius Pilate.*”

This name is introduced into the Creed as a proof that our Lord not only suffered, but that this took place at the time appointed. When Jacob was at the point of death, and his mind was opened to show what would happen to his posterity, he foretold to Judah, that his descendants should be a people until he, “who was to be sent,” should appear. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh shall come.”

The tribe of Judah constituted the



people called Jews. Their political character had ceased, in great measure, before our Lord began his ministry, for they were tributary to the Romans ; and after he left the world they were totally destroyed ; Jerusalem was taken, and the inhabitants were dispersed throughout the world.

Daniel, in his Prophecies, foretold that *seventy weeks of years* should pass from the period of his writing, and the “Messiah should be cut off.” This exact space of time was nearly completed, according to the common computation, by multiplying the number of years by the days of a week, and at the end of almost five hundred years after the prediction our Lord was crucified.

At the æra of Christ’s death the Jews acknowledged, as they publicly shouted, “no king but Cæsar;” their province was administered by a governor ; and he was Pontius Pilate. The name then shows that our Lord, as pre-signified, died when the Jews were no more a people.

“*Crucified.*” This word, following the



former, which determines the *time*, indicates the *manner* of Christ's death.

The punishment of crucifixion, most painful and ignominious, was inflicted by the Romans on their slaves. This was not a mode of torture in use among the Jews. If, therefore, our Lord was *crucified*, it was in consequence of the superior Roman power. But Isaac, the type of Christ, carried the wood on his own shoulder when his father took him to Mount Moriah for sacrifice. There was no capital punishment among the Romans at which the malefactors bore the instrument of death but crucifixion; our Lord for a short time was loaded with a beam of his cross, and in that was the anti-type of Isaac. He here, again, minutely confirmed what was in figure represented concerning him.

David also cried out, in his prophetic way of speech, "They pierced my hands and my feet; they stand staring and looking upon me; all they that see me laugh me to scorn." The word *crucified* implies

all this as literally undergone, according to prediction, by Jesus Christ.

“*Dead.*” This additional expression is the greatest importance to all the true believers in their Redeemer. For he might have suffered all his agony and cruel treatment of his enemies, and yet not have fulfilled the design of his coming.

Crucifixion, with all its pangs, was not necessarily attended with death. But Jesus “*was to be put to death,*” for by his obedience to death only was the world to be saved. That no doubt, therefore, might remain of the certainty “that we were redeemed,” it is made a part of our faith, “that he was dead.”

But it was contrary to the Jewish law that the bodies of executed criminals should remain upon the place of punishment; and it was pre-figured, as applied by our Lord to himself, by Jonah’s remaining three days in the fish, that he should be consigned for the same space of time to the heart of the earth.

In this transaction is clearly traced the hand of God. An honourable and rich counsellor interfered upon the expiring of our Lord upon the cross to secure his body. Joseph of Arimathea prepared a receptacle for the corpse in his own garden ; and having, according to the custom of the times, with the assistance of other friends, covered it in haste with spices, wrapped it in fine linen, and laid it in a new tomb. By this act a prophecy in Isaiah was fulfilled, “ though our Lord made his grave with the wicked (as with the two thieves), he was with the rich in his death.” I shall for the present stop at this part of the Article, and sum up what ye profess to believe, as far as has been already considered, when ye avow your faith in Jesus Christ.

*“ I give full assent to what I have been taught, that there was such a divine person, who came from Heaven, called Jesus Christ ; —that, as his name Jesus implies, he was the Saviour ; as his name Christ implies, was the anointed or appointed Saviour ; that he was*

*not as men, merely a creature of God, but, partaking of his spiritual essence and nature, which no one besides him can claim, 'God's only Son.' I believe that when he came into the world it was from a mysterious influence of the Holy Ghost; and that he was born with all the properties of a man, of a woman (Mary), a descendant, as was required, of David. I believe that he accomplished all that was written of a suffering Mediator, particularly in the last scenes of his life, in his agony, derision, and death. I believe that he suffered in the state of the world foretold, and by the manner foreshown. I believe that he then died, and by his blood washed away the sinful stain of man's nature.*

*"Lastly, I believe that his body, when proved and acknowledged by his enemies 'to be dead,' was committed as for burial to a grave."*

THE  
BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST,  
*The Son of God.*  
HIS DESCENT INTO HELL,  
AND  
RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

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ARTICLE III.

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A SERMON.





## SERMON III.

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ACTS ii. 31, 32.

*He seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ,  
“that his soul was not left in Hell.”  
This Jesus hath God raised up.*

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THESE words are part of St. Peter's first sermon, when the Holy Ghost had given to him the extraordinary power of utterance, upon the day of Pentecost. Full of the Spirit, he had the boldness to rebuke the Jews “for crucifying the Lord of Life,” and gave the strongest attestation to the truth of his high character, by showing the intended application of his Death and Resurrection to the prophecy of David. The words of the text are a part of this argument, and are proper for my purpose in explaining other articles of the Apostles' Creed ;

*“ He descended into Hell, and rose again the third day from the dead.”*

The *first* of these articles, “*He descended into Hell,*” from the difficulty of ascertaining the precise construction of the words themselves, has been a subject, from the earliest times, of much disputation.

As I have ever considered them, they have a very simple meaning; and as such, when I have laid before you the interpretations of men, in former times, shall endeavour, by explanation, to make them equally satisfactory to your own comprehension.

The word translated *Hell*, is borrowed from Greek derivation, and is used by all writers, whether in prose or verse, to signify the invisible state, appointed for the souls of men after their death. The original word itself signifies, the Land of Darkness, or the Land of Forgetfulness; in the same way as the Psalmist speaks “of the valley of the shadow of death.” “In death no man remembereth thee.” To these regions the unenlightened sons of men as-

signed the seat of punishment and of bliss (of Tartarus and Elysium); and believed that souls were tormented or made happy there, when they were set free from the bondage of the body. To such an abode the soul of the blessed Jesus *could* not pass, “for he had done no sin; nor had guile been found in his mouth;” nor, if these dreary realms were the residence of the fallen angels, and the dwelling of Satan, could it, as many have supposed, have been the place to which the soul of Christ went down, that he might obtain a triumph over their king and them, in the dominions of despair. All this had been done when our Lord died: Hell, as the receptacle of misery, was closed up, when he expired upon the cross. The Romanists held a strange opinion, among others equally unwarrantable, “that the soul of Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth, or Hell,” that he might open the doors of a prison, where the souls of all good men were confined, who had existed upon earth

before the time of his coming. There is no authority in Scripture for such doctrine, and therefore we, of the Reformed Church, reject it as one of the whimsical maxims of fallible men.

What St. Peter says of our Lord's "preaching to the spirits in prison," is made the foundation of this pretended truth; but the passage there, if rightly considered, has no such meaning; it evidently alludes to the power of the Holy Spirit conferred upon man, as the reward of our Lord's death and sufferings, by which they, who from the earliest days had been dead in sin, were *quicken'd* or made alive, and their minds, as it were in prison or captivity before, were set at large and rendered free. These different opinions of the word "Hell," being thus refuted, I shall now add, what I humbly conceive, and have always thought to be, the true and simple interpretation. Our blessed Lord, for our redemption, had taken upon him human flesh, and into that body, as it is found in every common man,

God was pleased to breathe a living soul. When he had performed all which was written of him, by suffering on the cross, he expired, or gave up the ghost. Our religion teaches us, and melancholy example confirms it, that, when disease or any other cause shall expel the vital principle from the breast, as a consequence of the sad separation, the body ceases to move, or is dead. Its former habitation being now no longer fit for its late guest, whither does it go? It is the language of reason which tells us, “to a dwelling appointed by God for its reception (for it can never die) till, at his command, it shall hereafter be re-united to its former abode, or place of possession.” And this I fully believe to be the only meaning of this article in the Creed. Our Lord had died as man; his ghost, or life, had been breathed out from his body in the *same* manner as it quits its hold in any other man when death shall come. It is, therefore, by parity of reasoning, to be believed that his soul was sepa-



rated from his body as it would be in any man, and that it remained in the state of disunion in the ordinary way of man, till it was recalled at the day of his Resurrection.

The word *descended*, is here inserted in allusion to the vulgar conception, “that even in infinite space there is a fixed point above our head and a point beneath our feet. That upon any occasion we rise upwards to the Heavens, or sink downwards to the bottom of the earth.” It simply signifies, he departed.

The summary of this Article thus explained is this :—

*“ I believe that when our Lord expired upon the cross, and his body being taken down was laid in the sepulchre, his spirit or soul was separated from it, and that it continued in that state among other departed souls till the hour came, when it was replaced in its former mansion at his Resurrection.”*

2. The *Resurrection*, as the next Article



which the Creed brings under consideration, affords matter of the highest importance, and of the greatest consolation, for the belief of man.

“ *The third day He rose again from the dead !* ”

The return of our Lord to life is the great foundation of a Christian's faith. It is the bulwark of our religion ; it is the immoveable pillar upon which our trust in the *certainty of his divine mission* rests ; and consequently the hope cherished by mankind, of a blessed immortality, alone depends ; for, had not this event taken place at the time, and in the manner promised, our preaching in the name of Jesus Christ would all be vain.

For the strengthening of your belief, and creating an unqualified assent to the contents of this Article, I shall endeavour to lay before you all the evidence which can be required, for the assurance that when ye profess your persuasion “ that our

blessed Saviour returned to life," ye are convinced of an undeniable and uncontrollable truth.

Jesus in the course of his ministry, upon many occasions, referred to the prospect of his Death ; but at all times subjoined his Resurrection. Upon one occasion he said, " the Son of Man (so describing himself) must suffer many things, and be put to death ; but on the third day shall rise again." Upon another, when the Pharisees were asking him by what authority he was doing such marvellous things ? he answered them, " Destroy this temple (meaning his own body), and in three days I will raise it up !"

Had our Saviour pretended to a power which he did not possess ; had he presumed to foretel an event which did not afterwards happen ; had he made his " rising again " the test of his really coming down upon the earth from God, and that had not been fulfilled, what would have followed ? He would have been convicted by

his own words of the grossest imposture ; and all the credit bestowed upon his solemn declarations must have been a delusion.

Thanks let us all return, with daily and fervent praise, to the Almighty Father, “ that his Son was a partaker of *his own* nature, and that all he promised, and led believers in him to expect, was true.—“ *He rose again the third day from the dead.*”

Before I proceed to lay the particular circumstances of his Resurrection before you, and point out the irrefragable support the fact obtains from uncorrupt and concurrent testimony, I shall show how *necessary* it was that it should take place for the completion of figure and of prophecy.

1. The chief figure to which Jesus himself was pleased to refer for the expediency of his Resurrection, was the wonderful manner in which Jonah had lain in the body of the whale, and on the third day was cast alive again upon the shore. The extraordinary event of the Prophet's preservation was made use of by Jesus to exem-

plify what should happen to *himself*. Had, therefore, “his rising again from the grave” not corresponded with the manner fore-shown, and the exact order of time predicted, he must, by his own reference, have proved himself a deceiver. As Jonah was “three days and three nights in the whale,” so did Christ continue for the same space of time in the heart of the earth.

2. The chief prophecy which foretold the certainty of our Lord’s Resurrection was, that of David in the sixteenth Psalm. “My heart,” says he, “was glad, and my glory rejoiced; my flesh also shall rest in hope; because thou shalt not leave my soul in Hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.” St. Peter, in his first sermon, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, expressly applies the words of the royal Prophet to Christ. He tells the Jews that the Patriarch, seeing in his mind the Resurrection of Christ, spake of *His* soul as not to be left in Hell, *i. e.* as I have above explained to you in the grave, and that *His*

flesh should not see corruption. It was, therefore, an indispensable miracle to be performed by Jesus that, as prefigured and foretold, he should be alive again.

3. I shall now make it my business to show, by incontestable proofs, that the event did actually happen, "*He rose again.*"—The body of Jesus was removed from the cross, in the presence of many beholders, and conveyed by a rich man, for the forms of burial, to his own garden.

As the Sabbath was at hand, upon which no work could be done, the usual ceremonies of embalming were postponed. The sepulchre was new, hewn, as the Jewish custom was, out of rock, and therefore could have but one entrance. The enemies of Christ remembering what he had said, "that he should rise himself up again," and fearful, lest his disciples should by night carry off the corpse, and so forge a Resurrection, applied to the governor for his assistance. A stone had been rolled by the disciples to the mouth of the tomb for



security. At the request of the priests, Pilate made this safe from the possibility of a removal, by stamping the seal of his authority upon it. He also, at their desire, stationed a band of Roman soldiers before it, to prevent any attempt which might be made to force a passage into the sepulchre. But the words “of Jesus did stand.” His disciples could not have dared, had they been so inclined, to undertake the impracticable work, for there was no way of entering but one, and this was covered by a huge stone at the mouth: this was also sealed, and a guard of armed men stood before it. So far, indeed (though the Jews spread the story), were the followers of Christ from desiring to bear the body away, that, when the Sabbath was past, they came at dawn of day, and brought a mixture of spices to embalm it.

There could not exist the shadow of imposition here. While the pious women, who had been the melancholy spectators of all which had happened, were on their



way for the sacred office, they were, on a sudden, surprised by a violent concussion of the air, resembling that of an earthquake. “The soldiers were astonished and fell to the ground.” The women, having doubted with themselves how it would be possible to remove the stone from the cave, approached, and, to their consternation, saw that “it was opened ;” for it was at that time that Jesus had come forth.

When they arrived they looked in, saw the grave-clothes lying, and the napkin which had been folded round their Master’s head. Affrighted, they hastened from the place, and, as they were informed by Angels, who told them, “that the Lord was risen,” were impatient to inform the other disciples of what had come to pass. Peter, the most earnest, and John, the beloved, were surprised at the news ; and, showing by their haste that they had not carried the body from its concealment, ran with an eager haste to be witnesses of what had

been told them. They found the tomb opened, the clothes lying, but no body ; and returned home again in confusion. It was reserved for Mary Magdalene, after she had complained “ that the Jews had taken the Lord away,” not only to see the two Angels in shining garments sitting, one at the head, and the other at the foot, where Jesus had lain, but to be the first to behold the Saviour himself. For, as she was weeping, and, as she supposed, was asked by the keeper of the garden, “ why she so bewailed ?” Jesus, in his usual tone of voice, spake, and made himself known to her. Dispensing at that time with the homage which she naturally offered to pay him, he despatched her to the disciples with the news, “ that she had seen the Lord.”

After the death of Jesus, his friends, for privacy, had been accustomed to assemble themselves together in an upper room, and to shut the door. He, in the evening, by

an invisible power opening the bars, appeared, on a sudden, in the midst of them. He then, as for an outward sign, breathed upon them, and formally appointed them to be teachers of his Gospel.

It appeared that one of them, Thomas, was not present when Jesus came into the company. This Apostle was, for a time, wonderfully obstinate in his belief; that so, by his doubts, he might afterwards give a fuller testimony to the truth, "that Jesus was not only risen, but that he rose in the *same* body." For, when Jesus appeared again, he challenged Thomas to make a full trial of what he was so determined to know. He touched him, put his fingers into the print of the nails, thrust his hand into his side, and then exclaimed, "Thou art my Lord and my God!"

Jesus was pleased to make himself known also at Emmaus, when the two disciples, who had walked with him to the village, ate bread in his company, and

their eyes were opened. According to appointment, he met all his disciples in Galilee, at which time, in order to show that, after death, his *two* natures were reunited *in* him, he worked a miracle in the draught of fishes. St. Paul mentions his being seen by above "*five hundred*" brethren at once.

But the article says, "that our Lord not only rose from the dead, but on the *third* day." It is proper for me to mention to you, that the word made use of by the Evangelist to express the intermediate space between our Lord's Death and Resurrection, comprehends both the day and the night, and was in ordinary signification in the days the Gospel was written. Had it not been so, he could not have remained in the grave for the time specified.

He was crucified, and died at the time of offering the evening sacrifice, on the last day of the week. This, according to the usual mode of reckoning, was *one* day ;

the Sabbath, the first day of the week (during the whole of which he lay in the grave), was the *second*; the morning following the Sabbath, though not a *whole* day, but *part* only, was the *third*.

And thus literally was fulfilled, in the most complete manner, all that was to be done in the Resurrection of Jesus.

*“ He rose again the third day from the dead.”* A summary of the contents of this article is this: *I believe that, as our Lord foretold, he broke the bands of death, and appeared again alive upon the earth. I believe that when he rose he was perfect man and perfect God, consisting again of his two natures; for he suffered himself to be touched, ate in the presence of his disciples, and wrought a wonder, to show his power. I believe that he rose in the manner fore-shown, and in the Person foretold. I believe that his Resurrection came to pass at the very precise time it was appointed; and, lastly, that by the many appearances he, on*



*different occasions, made to his followers, he was the same Jesus ; and that all the reports which were raised by the Chief Priests to destroy the belief, “ that he, as he declared it should be, did rise again, were false.”*



THE  
BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST,  
*The Son of God.*

HIS ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN, SITTING AT  
THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

AND  
RETURN TO JUDGE THE WORLD.

—◆—  
ARTICLE IV.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON IV.

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ACTS i. 11.

*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into Heaven.*

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OUR Lord, having discharged every part of his assigned ministry, appointed confidential friends to preach his Gospel, and promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit for the performance of their future labours; there continued no necessity for his remaining upon the earth; and, therefore, he returned, as it was by Elijah's ascent foreshown, and foretold by David concerning him, to his Father.

That this wonderful event might take place in the presence of his chosen followers, he directed them to meet him on a mountain in Galilee.

When he had come to them, and given

charge “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Holy Spirit, their Comforter,” a cloud, while he stretched out his hands, and was blessing them, carried him up on high.

The disciples, as was most natural, followed him with their eyes, as he was going, and for some time lifted their heads upwards to the air, expecting that he would come down again, till he was removed out of their sight.

While they were fixed in this attitude of surprise and doubtful expectation, two messengers from Heaven appeared, and accosted them in the words of the text:—  
“*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into Heaven.*” In this declaration sufficient matter is contained for the explanation of other articles in the Creed: “*He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;*

*from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."*

The Ascension of Christ is so important and comfortable an article of Faith, that it is found in *every* Creed in *every* Church. It is so well attested, that there is no dispute but that it really took place, and in such a *manner* as displayed wisdom in the counsel of God ; and with such an *assurance* also, as promised all good to man.

1. The persons who were assembled to be the witnesses of our Lord's Ascension, did not consist of a great crowd of men, who, from their number, might have had an *indistinct* view of the scene itself, or been unacquainted, as strangers, with the form and countenance of him who was, in so marvellous a way, lifted up in the rising cloud. Had *many* been present, and some of them been really known to the Saviour, through the introduction of his miraculous cures before his death, it could not be supposed that, from a situation not sufficiently near, as he was placed upon an

eminence, and a hill, they could have had it in their power to discern whether he was the *identical* Jesus, consisting of a *real* body, much more of the *same* body, as they had been accustomed to look upon before the change of his late dissolution. Had the spectators been convinced, beyond all doubt, “that the figure did in truth consist of flesh and blood,” and that it represented no *other* than Christ himself, yet, as most of them were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Jewish law, and disappointed in their expectations of a Messiah, they might have represented what they saw in no true light, but joined with the Chief Priests and Rulers, in decrying a delusion. Happy, happy, therefore, in its consequences, as well as truly characteristical of Divine Wisdom was it, that the return of our Lord to his Father was visible to his faithful *friends* alone ; and confined to the sight of men, who were to be the defenders of the truth, and to maintain the reality of their Master’s departure, against the cun-



ning and malice of all his adversaries. They, though *few* in number, were furnished with a power of giving a ready answer to any gainsayer, who might positively argue against the possibility of the Ascension, or attempt to ridicule so groundless a supposition. They had been the companions of Jesus through the whole course of his ministry ; they had been admitted to a sight of the marvellous cures which he had wrought ; had heard his doctrines, and been partakers of his domestic life, food, and habitation. They, therefore, could not, at any time, *mistake* his person. These *same* men had also received from him every testimony they could require, after his Resurrection, that he *was a man* ; and, by the positive demand of one among them, that he was the *same* man, when he was raised from the dead, as they had the familiar intercourse with, of society and friendship, before his Crucifixion. It was impossible that greater fitness could exist in any transaction than this. Good indeed was God to the Christian world, in per-

mitting *them* alone to witness his Son's ascent to glory, who had been with him before and after death, and could not be *deceived* in what they were admitted to see. From them we all learn, not only that Jesus went to Heaven, but that he went in *human* form, having thereby an assurance, that after his example, we, of the same nature and bodily parts, are capable of *translation* from earth to the mansions of Heaven. If, however, the remarks already made be thought *insufficient* for supporting this Article of Faith, and an appeal be made to objectors from them, as fallible men, the words of the text may soon be brought and referred to, as *completely* establishing the doctrine.

The Almighty (all thanks be given to his merciful care!) was pleased to put the arguments drawn from the *incompetency* of these witnesses entirely aside, by sending his *angels* with a full power to proclaim the departure of his Son from the regions of the earth to the realms above. Through

them he informed the disciples, that their gazing in the air was not indeed without a cause, but that it would be of no effect, as the object of their solicitude was taken up, and would not be found again by them, before a very distant period of future time should come. These messengers, in their questions, carry the appearances of *expositulators* with them for a want of faith. They seem to cast a tacit reflection upon them, that they distrusted their own sight, and seemed, by their stay, silence, and posture, to doubt the reality of the marvellous scene which had passed in their view.

“*Ye men of Galilee,*” said they, “*why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? Jesus is taken from you.*” In these words is a full declaration by *God himself*, through his servants, who carried his instructions, “that Jesus Christ, our Lord, did actually, as he appeared to his disciples, go up to the kingdom of glory, there to reign with his Almighty Father, till all eternity shall end.

2. The former part of the Article being thus explained, I proceed to the latter ; and shall lay before you what is implied in these words, “that, after his Ascension, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God.”

In order to assist men in forming a right, though imperfect, conception of heavenly things, imagery is often borrowed from the earthly ; and they are by *comparison* led to make some *inadequate*, though, in a degree, *satisfactory* judgment upon such sublime truths, as, in their present condition of intellect, they have not the ability to *comprehend*. Thus, in speaking of honour conferred upon our Redeemer, when, as the Psalmist says, “ he had drank of the brook in the way,” and, without spot of sin, having atoned for sin by a painful and disgraceful punishment, he was raised from the Earth below, to Heaven above, we use a practice among the Eastern nations, to distinguish him, as seated nearest to his Father.

It was the custom of princes of the East, when they were desirous to promote a faithful servant to the pinnacle of the chief distinction, to place him on their *right* hand. This was the most splendid mark of their favour, and considered as the greatest recompense for any toil, exploit, or danger. God, as a spirit, cannot consist of bodily parts, nor be brought to the inferior character of visible shape of limbs ; he is, however, described, in this Article, as composed of hands, because the idea is best suited to the narrowness of our understanding. Thus our Saviour promises to the blessed, that they shall sit on thrones, as his Father is seated on *his* throne. The true meaning of this part in the Article is this, “ that (as the Apostle says) our Lord was exalted far above all principalities and powers,” and might and names, which are or can be in the whole world of creation. Rewards for obedience, exceeding all conception of man, were placed upon the Redeemer’s head, when he rode triumph-



ant over Death and Hell to his Father's presence and glory.

Instead of busying our minds in reconciling expressions of *this* kind, and reducing the incomprehensible nature of God's majesty to the humble standard of human thought, let regard be rather paid to that *benign* office on which our Lord immediately entered upon his arrival in the *gates of Heaven*. He presented himself before his Father, as an advocate in the cause of sinners, and a faithful Mediator between the strictness of pure justice, and the mildness of mercy. At the name of Mediator, who among us can refrain from breaking out in joy, surpassing all understanding? Our Lord might have died for us; he might have risen again for our justification: he might have "led (as the Psalmist says) captivity captive," or gone up on high in triumph over sin; but weakened, as we are, by inherent propensities to evil, and defiled daily by habitual guilt, what should we have hoped for? what should we



not have dreaded? what should we not, in mind, have suffered, had not our Lord, when he left this world, began to exercise a *new* character for us, and to employ the intervention of his *interceding* prayers, that our iniquities might be forgiven? Hence it is that despair hath no seat in our bosom. Hence it is that though we offend daily, and keep not the commandments of God before our eyes, we hope and trust he will yet overlook our transgressions, upon sincere repentance; and if we are really sorry for our offences, will forgive, through Jesus Christ.

3. The latter part of this Article contains most serious doctrine, and is highly interesting, in its awful consequences, to the whole race of mankind. It declares openly to the world, that Jesus, who was seated, upon his Ascension, at the right hand of his Father, shall come *again*, not as *he went up*, for the reward of his sufferings and the mediation for sinful men, but in the *tremendous character of a Judge*.

As sin is the stain in every man's nature, where can be found the offender against his God, who shrinks not at the thought, "that he must appear at the bar of righteous judgment, and give an undissembled account of his life upon the earth!" The statement to no one can be so clear and innocent but he must feel a sad misgiving; he must shudder at the thought of rising again from the grave, and presenting himself for the award of justice at the tribunal of an impartial God! We all fearfully think of this arraignment, and, whatsoever our thoughtless occupation here may be, must tremble.

*"From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."*

This is the coming to which the angels in the text allude, when they tell to the gazing disciples "that he shall come in like manner as they see him go into Heaven." And *what* is that manner? It is a *sudden* and *unexpected* appearance. It is open to the sight of all who shall be present at his

arrival. It is the return of him who left the earth in the form of man ; and in *that form* calling the souls of all mankind into his presence for judgment.

The next inquiry is in what the judgment will consist. It will consist of an impartial examination into the lives of all, in whatever age, under whatever dispensation, in whatever quarter of the inhabited world, they may have had their being. Natural and revealed religion will afford different rules for judgment, and affix to them who have existed under them a greater or less degree of criminality or obedience ; they will condemn or acquit more *particularly* according to the degree of *knowledge* which they shall have imparted to the world.

The force of *conscience*, rejected or regarded, will be the criterion for the *unenlightened* ; the *commandments* delivered from Mount Sinai, will try the Hebrews and their descendants ; the *doctrines of Jesus*, all Christians. How then shall *we* stand ? In what order do *we* come ? In no other than

as faithful or sinful, living under the Gospel. This was the fulfilling of all knowledge, however indistinctly given before, and the substance of every shadow which it had pleased God to grant to former generations. It, therefore, follows of course, that if God hath done more for *us*, hath revealed himself more fully, and hath taught us his perfect will, the judgment to be exercised upon *us* must be more *comprehensive*, and subject all who shall be found guilty to a greater condemnation.

That this judgment will be in mercy, we learn from the circumstance declared by our Lord himself, “ that God had committed the whole to him, as the *Son of Man* ; and also because he *knew what was in him*, or the infirmities of his nature.

The scene itself, when this judgment shall take place, is to be found, by all men who shall consult the description of it, in the Gospel of St. Matthew. They there may behold the Son of Man in his glory, sitting on a throne, accompanied by his an-

gels. At the sound of a trump all who have had life shall rise ; the dead in the faith of Christ shall rise first, and hear a blessing pronounced upon them, standing on the *right* hand of the *Redeemer* ; the unrepenting wicked shall be placed on the *left*, and sent away under the curse of rejection into the company of evil spirits. Who can think of this universal assembly ; of the terrors of the Judge ; the impartiality of examination ; the sentence to be passed ; and not fear ? It is sufficient surely to strike the hearts of the most obdurate men.

The Article says, “ that our Lord shall come to *judge the quick*.” By this expression, “ *the quick*,” are to be understood, all those who, upon the arrival of that day, shall be found *alive* upon the earth. For our Lord will knock at the door when men shall not look for his appearance, and surprise them in all their ways of vice or virtue, of joy or sorrow.

The Apostle says, that the *quick* shall be



“ changed,” or undergo so sudden an alteration from corruption to incorruption, as shall resemble a rising from death to life; so that *all* mankind, whether *quick* or *dead*, may be judged together. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, expressly writes, “ that they who remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not *prevent* them who are asleep, *i. e.* they who shall be alive shall not be judged *before* them who are *raised from the grave*.”

The summary of this Article is this :

*I believe, upon the authority of the Evangelists, “ that our Lord having continued forty days upon the earth after his Resurrection, was taken up into the air in the presence of his chosen disciples, and seated in the highest place of honour by his Father, ‘ on his right hand.’ ” I believe, “ that he then entered upon the office of Intercessor for man.” I believe “ that at a period appointed by the unknown counsels of God, he shall return from his throne of glory, in a visible manner as man, to be the judge of men.”*



*I believe “ that all nations shall be gathered before him, and after trial receive a sentence of happiness or misery.” I believe “ that at the time of his appearance many shall be existing upon the earth, and shall suffer a change as of death to life ; that God may be righteous in his dealing with all, and every creature be made equally capable of immortality ; when what was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption.”*



THE  
BELIEF IN THE HOLY GHOST.

—◆—  
ARTICLE V.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON V.

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ST. JOHN xv. 26.

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

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THE Third Person in the Holy Trinity, which is the subject of the *next* Article of the Apostles' Creed, is of so *refined* and *incomprehensible* a nature, that the endowments of mind, hitherto bestowed upon man, have not the power to investigate it, much less to explain it to their satisfaction. All that can be learned or understood of the *Holy Spirit*, is from the *Scriptures*. These contain what it hath been the pleasure of God to *reveal*, and thence, of course, what it is *required* of man to *believe*.

The *unbelievers*, or they who pretend to dispute the divine doctrine of the Holy

Ghost, as a *Person*, consider him merely as a *quality*, in the same manner as they would speak of light and heat, received from the sun. These, however, are the *effects* of that great luminary in the heavens ; but not the *body itself*.

To this objection it is fairly answered, “ that the Scriptures describe the Holy Ghost as performing *actions* ;” these necessarily can be done by a *Person* only ; for what *quality* can *act* ? Can it in *ourselves* ? Can good temper act ? Can an evil one ? They may *dispose* us to act, but can *effect* nothing of themselves. An agent must have *substance* : a mere propensity of mind, or heart, can have none : but the Holy Spirit is said to *go*, to *come*, to be *sent*, to *enlighten*, to *speak*, to *comfort*. Common sense must tell every unbiassed man, that such expressions belong to a *Person*, not to *powers* without a *substance*.

St. Paul beseeches the converts to whom he wrote, not to “ *grieve* the Spirit of God ;” but it must be a *Person* only who can be



*grieved*. No *operation* or *effect* can admit of imparted grief. The Spirit *intercedeth* with groans for man. Who can, for a moment, imagine but a *Person* is here signified? Can intercession itself be supposed to be made, unless there be an Intercessor?

The Spirit also *teacheth*. What is necessary for the purpose of such an office? Teaching surely requires an agent; as they who are to be taught must be persons themselves, so the *thing* to be taught must originally have proceeded from a teacher.

The Spirit *knoweth* all things. To *know*, argues a mind fit to comprehend and to retain. Can this be said of any created *thing*? Can it be spoken of an *attribute*, which hath no substance? The Spirit *revealeth* the will of God. If the meaning of the word “revealed” be at all considered, it will, of course, suggest the necessity of a person; for revelation can no otherwise be made than by *signs*, such as voices and figures. But to *speak*, or to make tokens

of any kind, requires *life*; yet we all know that the strongest qualities, either of mind or of body, can have no life. It would be endless to multiply arguments to this nature. There cannot exist a doubt, if the Holy Scriptures be *true*, that what they communicate of the Holy Ghost must be true also. Our Saviour sent forth his Apostles with the commission “to baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This express *charge* shows them, in its distinguishing terms, to be three *different* Persons.

1. God the Father cannot be said to *speak* to himself because he *doeth*; the Holy Ghost *speaketh*.

The Father cannot *intercede* for himself; the Holy Ghost *intercedeth*.

The Father cannot be *sent* as a Comforter to himself; but the Holy Ghost *came* as the Comforter.

Our Saviour said, the Holy Ghost should *receive* of his; but the Father could not *receive* from himself, for he gives.

But the Holy Ghost is also *uncreated*, because he is the Spirit of God ; and God could not be *created*.

Sins committed against the Holy Ghost are not to be forgiven. If he was not a *Person*, nothing could be committed against him ; and if he were *created*, sins could not be without a possibility of pardon.

2. The Holy Ghost also cannot be the *Son*, for the *world was* made by the Son, or the Word, as St. John says ;—but Moses writes, *before* the world was created, “ the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

Another argument to show that the Holy Ghost must be an *uncreated* Person, may be drawn from the article of the Creed, “ that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost,” for by *that* conception he was called the Son of God.

But if the Holy Spirit be a Person, and not *created*, he *must* be God ; for there can be but *one* uncreated, and *he* is God.

That the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, is *God*,

is also to be inferred from St. Peter's reproof of Ananias and Sapphira. He told the former, that he had lied against the Holy Ghost; and the latter, that she had sinned against *God*.

The bodies of men are called by St. Paul the *temples* of the Holy Ghost. But what can give the just notion of a *temple* but a *residence of God*? and who can reside, or dwell, but a Person?

But the attributes of *God* are also ascribed to the Holy Ghost; hence he is said to *know* all things; to have all *power*; to be everywhere *present*. But if these things belong to *God* only, the Holy Ghost, who exerciseth them, must be a partaker of the *same* nature.

Thus far the Scriptures assist us in forming a belief in the Third Person of the Trinity—"the Holy Ghost." They tell us in what his nature consists, as *distinct* from the Father and Son; but they go no farther. The degree of intellect, conferred by the Creator, in his wiser counsels upon the

weak minds of his creatures upon earth, *stops here*. Who can ascend into Heaven, and there see the Deity as *he is*? Implicit *faith*, however, is justly required from all, to whom the truth is revealed, because he who reveals it is true himself; and the *Scriptures* which contain the revelation, being the word of God, are true also.

Instead, therefore, of misemploying our time in a fruitless research; instead of harassing our understanding by doubtful conjectures, and encouraging curious disquisitions upon points above our conception, it surely must be wise to limit our inquiries to what we *may* know, and to turn such knowledge to our good.

I shall, therefore, leave all other attempts to explain the precise meaning of the terms, which describe the relationship of the Holy Ghost with the Father, as *proceeding* from him, or with the Son, as *testifying* of him; satisfying myself, however that it *really* subsists, because I learn it from the words of *Christ himself*.



I shall direct your thoughts now to the *manner* in which the Holy Ghost hath been manifested to the world. The operations of the Spirit, according to the New Testament, have been of *two* kinds:—1. That which was displayed in an *extraordinary* effusion of power, on the day of Pentecost; 2. That which, from the ceasing of the miraculous efforts, continues to influence the hearts of all the true believers in Christ, by the *ordinary* gift of inspiration or *grace*. These have been equally necessary for the great purpose of man's redemption. The more bright and *public* display of the marvellous glory which accompanied the *visible* descent of the Holy Ghost at the *Feast of Weeks*, was requisite for the *sudden* enlightening of the mind of the Apostles, confirming them in the belief of their Master, giving them the wonderful variety of speech and language, and drawing the multitude, who saw and heard them, to an immediate conversion. When the purposes, for which this communication of



heavenly light was given, were accomplished, as there remained no necessity for its continuance, it *ceased*. The *private* influence upon the *heart*, disposing it to all goodness, succeeded. As this is still, and ever will be, necessary for the guidance of all Christians, it yet *remains to us*, and is placed as a lamp, perpetually burning in our breast, to give light to the understanding, and to warm the pious affections of every believer.

Next to the *manner* by which the Holy Spirit operates in our minds, it will be proper to show in what its *effects* consist.

1. Our blessed Lord, its first and principal office, under the name of the *Comforter*.

This word implies relief in distress, and consolation in affliction. It was most properly applied by Jesus for the support of his *chosen friends*, when they were to be deprived of their Master's presence ; to go forth as preachers of his Gospel, in the face of malice ; to resist with *boldness* the violence of inveterate prejudice ; and,

finally, to suffer torture and death, in attestation of that *truth* which they should publish to the world.

The same word is not less applicable to all Christians, who, in the course of their warfare and opposition to the temptations of the world, and the wiles of Satan, are liable to much vexation, fears, and trouble. The dependance upon the aid of the Holy Spirit, the consolatory suggestions of his power, and the assurance raised by his secret admonition, “that the Lord loveth whom he is pleased to chasten,” disarm the severest trials of all their terror, and stop the sighs of the most afflicting sorrow.

2. It is the office of the *Holy Spirit* to raise us, by a *new birth* as it were, from wickedness to holiness; to rekindle in us the light of reason, which sinfulness may have nearly extinguished; and to make us *again alive* to our neglected duty. He regenerates us.

3. It is also the office of the Spirit to unite all true believers in *one* bond of fel-

lowship ; to make them equally partakers of the same redemption ; and to claim alike an eternal inheritance, through Christ Jesus. For by *one Spirit* we are all baptized in *one* body.

4. It is the office also of the Spirit to assist us in our endeavours after the *righteousness* required by our faith. If we stand *alone* in *our own conceit* we cannot but fall ; for we are *not sufficient of ourselves* to do any thing as from *ourselves*. The Holy Ghost working within us, and with us, we are enabled to will and to do. *He* gives us our sufficiency.

5. The great blessing of the Holy Ghost again appears, from the relationship thereby obtained with *God* himself. For St. Paul says, as many as are led by the *Spirit* of God they are the *sons* of God. The pre-eminence of this high and distinguished character exalts the nature of man to a glorified condition above all things. That they are by the Spirit authorised to call God their *Father*, cannot but be a cause

of the proudest and most comfortable boasting to all believers.

I might enumerate many other benefits arising to man, in the different conditions of his being, from the power of the *Holy Ghost* ; I might enlarge upon the enlightening our minds by his grace ; disposing our wills ; establishing our faith in firmness ; and assisting our devotions. I might particularize his aid, by which he fortifies our minds against the assaults of temptation, when the evil spirit would otherwise be resisted in vain, and all his wiles prevail to our destruction. It is through the impulse of this Divine Monitor that we break all *bonds asunder*, and snap the hidden snares which are laid to entangle our feet. It is the Spirit which carries us through all open and hidden dangers, and stretches out that shield of faith which repels the darts of offence from *any* adversary.

But there comes a moment to all created men when the power of the Holy Ghost is more *evidently* and *importantly* found—

the moment of death. The offices of the Spirit *above* pointed out, concern the actions of men, and the comforts derived from them, while they are proceeding in the journey of life with bodily strength and health of mind. The *last* office of this Divine Person which I shall now mention, respects the sad hour, when the vigour of the limbs is all decaying, when the soundness of the understanding is yielding to the infirmities of sinking nature, and dissolution is making its visible approaches with irresistible terrors. At *that* gloomy season, every ray of light nearly extinguished and gone, *what* shall give aid? *What* shall, for a short time, compose the trembling heart? *What* shall reconcile it to the dreadful scene in view? *What* shall afford it courage to meet the stroke of the uplifted spear, and, *above all*, to appear before an impartial Judge; a Judge, to whom the whole life hath been open; from whom no secret act can have been concealed; who knoweth the inmost heart; all its former desires;



all its pretensions to mercy ; all its aggravated calls for angry justice ? Were it not for the *Holy Spirit* infusing into our hearts the softening medicine of patience, submission, and resignation, *we*, as Job by his faithless monitor was advised, “ might curse our God and die.” Were it not for the drops of sweetness which the Holy Spirit pours into the cup of bitterness, despair would cast us down, and bring us low, even *before* our hour, to the grave. Were it not for the small voice awakening our dejected breasts, and crying in our ear, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,” no eye would be free from tears ; no flesh from trembling ; no heart from dismay. The Holy Ghost coming upon us as with wings of a messenger from Heaven, and pointing upwards to the realms of happiness, showing us the Redeemer, sitting at the right hand of God, and “ the courts of the Lord’s house,” through his blood and merits, opened to receive us, in the midst of agony we smile



at pain ; in the midst of all our sorrows we rejoice ; in the midst of our dissolution we triumph ; and, as in the Revelations of St. John, cry out, as we expire, in hope and faith, “ Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

These are some of the blessings derived to mankind from the Holy Ghost. They are to be obtained from his operation ; and *this* is the *only* means by which it is either to be hoped for or obtained—Prayer. “ Ask,” says our Lord, “ and ye shall receive.”

But it must be of little use once to *obtain* unless there be a disposition to *remain* in the possession of a gift. It is for *this* reason we subjoin to our common prayers the humble request to God, “ that he may never *take away* his Holy Spirit from us.”

The summary of the Article, above attempted to be explained, is this :

*I believe in the Third Person of the Godhead—the Holy Ghost. I believe, as the word of God, and as the Scriptures have taught me, that there exists this Person,*

*though the mode or difference of existence be at present incomprehensible by me. I believe that he, as Scripture teaches me, is a Person, neither the Father nor the Son, but proceeding or issuing from them both. I believe that, as he is of the Divine Nature, all honour is due to him, as of right must belong. I believe, to my comfort, that he is mighty in power, and that through him all the dispensations of God are communicated to mankind; that he confers the means of grace, and creates in us the hope of glory. I believe that, through him, every support is derived to the mind of man, both in the present difficulties of the world, and the prospect of future happiness; for he administers consolation while we live, and renders our departure calm and serene when we come to die !*

THE BELIEF  
IN  
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH;  
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS;  
THE  
FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

—◆—  
ARTICLE VI.  
—◆—

A SERMON.



## SERMON VI.

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1 COR. xii. 27.

*Ye are the body of Christ, and members one of another.*

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THE Articles of the Creed, which have been already explained, contain the *principal* doctrines of the Christian faith.

They comprehend the substance of the first commission to teach, which our blessed Lord was pleased to give to his Apostles before he ascended into Heaven. *They* were enjoined by him to go forth and baptize in the countries through which they should pass, or the then known world, in his *own* name ; in that *first of all*, of his *Father*, and of the *Holy Ghost*. The compilers of our Creed have followed this injunction, and, agreeably to the teaching of the Apostles, have required the assent of Christians to the same objects of their faith.

The remaining Articles are inserted as the peculiar doctrines of the *reformed* or *Protestant* Church, in opposition to the errors of the *Romish* and *other* favourers of schism. The consideration of these will afford matter for explanation, and most properly claim your attention. One of the *Fathers* remarked, that there was much propriety observed by the drawers up of the Creed, after they had distinguished their belief in the *three* Persons of the God head, in immediately subjoining the *means* by which they were worshipped—"The Church."

"*I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.*"

The word "Church," whether it hath a relation to its original derivation, either from Pagan or Scriptural language, signifies an assembly, or a *meeting* together of men, for the serious purposes of the *state*, or of *religion*.

Since the promulgation of the doctrines, and the establishment of Christianity, the word hath been taken to express the society



of those who have met together to celebrate the mercy of God, in the redemption of man by Jesus Christ. As the first believers of the Gospel were not confined to *one* nation, the Church *then* consisted of as many members as were found to believe in the Redeemer. These were either more or less in number, as circumstances allowed. As there were “added daily such as should be saved,” the meetings, of course, were multiplied. The foundation of faith among them all could be but one — “*Christ Jesus.*” When it is read that churches were established in nearer or more remote parts of the earth, it must be understood “that there was but *one* origin; collectively they formed, under *one* head, but *one* body.” There was, therefore, no impropriety in that Creed which inserted the word *one* before the Catholic Church. Wheresoever Christ is preached, by whatsoever inhabitants of the earth God may be worshipped through Christ, the Mediator, *there is* the Church. There may

be different appointments in the *form* of their service, but the *belief* itself constitutes the assembly of the faithful. The real Church of Christ consists, therefore, in *unity*.

1. The *criterion* by which this *real* Church is known, is its *doctrine* : for this reason the word “ holy ” is annexed to this Article.

The doctrines are the precepts of the Gospel. These constitute a society of believers, who have faith in Christ Jesus, and bind themselves according to that faith to lead a life of virtue.

The Evangelists delivered down the word of Christ by their writings, in order to confirm the Jews in the acts of moral worship ; and to draw off the Gentiles from idolatry. *All* converts, therefore, to Christianity were to consider the *pure* worship of God as the *basis* of their religion ; and as this led to holiness, that Church, which professedly assumed this mark of distinction, was called *holy*.

In *this* sense the Church stands unconnected with any assemblies of men, who make not the life of Christ alone the pillar of their building.

The chief object of the compilers, in this part of the Creed, was to mark *heretics*, or those who departed from the genuine word of Scripture, in their own faith; and by their new opinions, caused divisions among the other believers.

The Holy Church is that which teaches in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, in contradiction to all, who, of any sect, may be followers of innovations, and thereby embrace impious and blasphemous opinions.

Next to the *purity* of its doctrines, the Church is called “holy,” from its *effects*. Its *teaching* is one characteristic of its holiness; its *practice* another. It separates the pure gold from the dross, and constitutes its people zealous of good works.

In another sense the Church is “holy,” as it brings its members to a likeness of

God, the fountain of holiness, and to a sure promise also of reward ; for “ by holiness every man shall see the Lord :” hence the Saints are said, in the book of Revelations, “ to have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.” This *holy* Church is called *Catholic*. The term here made use of signifies *universal*. It was introduced into the Creed to show that the *particular* societies, under different teachers, whose whimsical tenets had created many divided assemblies of Christians, were only *parts of one body*, and not, as *they* supposed, complete of themselves, and unconnected with the general fellowship in Christ Jesus.

Could it be consistent with common sense, that a small number of believers assembling together under the persuasion of any individual teacher, wresting their consciences according to his private conceptions or misinterpretations of Scripture, could compose at their pleasure or fancy that *visible* Church of Christ ? Could it

agree with reason, that the *few* united in the cities of Asia, professing this or that doctrine of their *own*, could represent by *themselves* alone that Saviour whose merits were to extend to all believers? It therefore must appear to have been wisdom in the framers of the Creed to require an open declaration from all who professed themselves Christians, “that they believed in *one holy universal Church*,” united under the doctrines of him alone who was the corner-stone of the house to which they belong.

This observation will at once destroy the pretending systems of men and countries. It brings the Church to its necessary trial; and, like a touch-stone, shows at once the genuine or the borrowed title to pre-eminence. It, in one word, teaches that where the Scriptural communications, as given by the Apostles, are the foundation, there only is the Church; and, as before observed, where *they* are not, every building must be raised in sand.



2. To the Holy Catholic Church is added “that we believe there is a *communion of Saints*.”

According to the usage of saints in the New Testament, it is to be collected that the word implies “*true believers*,” for these in Christ Jesus are *sanctified*, or, from the nature of their faith, “*made holy*.”

It is not, as was remarked in the foregoing Article, for any individual men to *assume* this name at their own will. It is then only *rightly* applied when spoken of those who, while they are living upon the earth, act according to that faith; and when they die depart from the world with the *same* confidence in the *merits* of their Redeemer.

The expression *Communion* signifies that all Christians, resembling the parts connected with the body, have a natural intercourse and connexion with each other before death; and after the resurrection to a life of glory, shall unite in singing to the “Lamb that was slain!” and giving to him



“ honour, blessing, and power, for ever and ever.”

That there is a Holy Catholic Church and a Communion of Saints is made an object of belief. Why so? for *this* reason; Christians cannot but have pleasure in the persuasion, “ that there is a real household of faith, to which *they* belong, and that wherever this may be fixed, or in whatever form it may continue, it has but *one* Author, who will be with it to the end of the world;” and who hath also declared, “ that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.”

3. The next Article, strongly connected with the former, as it stands in our Creed, whether it runs in the words, “ *forgiveness of sins*,” as in the Apostles, or in *one baptism for the remission of sins*, as in the Nicene, was introduced as an *open* profession in answer to the *sectaries of the times*. by whom the sins before and after baptism were differently considered, as intitled to the mercy of God through Christ Jesus.

According to the acceptation of the

word Baptism among the Primitive Fathers, it was understood that the initiation into the religion of Jesus, by the emblem of *water*, was an assurance of pardon for *all* inherent defilement of nature, *before* they were admitted by that ceremony into the *new* covenant with God.

It was acknowledged to be an *outward* sign of an *inward* grace.

But though this washing of Baptism was acknowledged by *all* the sects, there were *some* of a more rigid temper who disputed the possibility of regeneration when guilt was contracted *after* Baptism.

As there was no warrant from Scripture to justify so discouraging and afflicting a notion ; a notion which excluded the efficacy of the most earnest *repentance*, the wiser compilers of our Belief thought it proper publicly to *discountenance* the *unjust* assertion, and to *condemn* an idea so destructive to the happiness of a very great number among the believers in Jesus Christ. They, therefore, upon the tenour of the

*whole* Gospel doctrines inserted the Article, “*the forgiveness of sins.*”

For a ready understanding of this Article it is necessary to define what is meant by *sin*, and through what *means* it is to be forgiven.

Sin is the wilful transgression of a law. A law is of greater or less obligation according to its sanction. As none can be greater than that which is established by the authority of God, the breach of that must be the most heinous offence which *can* be committed. That God was pleased, at a very early period of man's history, to make an explicit declaration of his will, is to be found in the Revelation he was pleased to make of himself to his creatures. Offence against that will constitutes sin; the violation of it exposes all to his indignation.

From the *first* man to the period when our Lord appeared, sin had branched out in various ways, and its guilt been aggravated by frequent commission.

The displeasure of God had been manifested both by general judgments and by partial punishments.

But the *true* nature of sin is to be collected from the New Testament, and the correction of it will be found more particularly expressed by Christ than by Moses and the Prophets. He describes sin as consisting, not only of actions *committed*, but *omitted* duties, and declares the punishment to be not of a temporal but eternal nature.

The Scriptures, however, which represent the divine Law-giver as severe in justice, clothe him in the milder dress of goodness and mercy. They hold forth the promises of forgiveness upon amendment of life ; they assure all sinners of an *accepted Mediation* ; they proceed in *one uniform* object to the end of their history ; they preserve occasional renewals of promises, “ that a Saviour should be born,” and that, through *him*, upon repentance, a restoration should be obtained to the lost favour of God.

“ *The forgiveness of sins,*” therefore, as an Article of the Creed, is a declaration, “ that God’s mercy will be extended in remitting trespasses through the blood and the atonement of his Son—the looked-for Messiah ; him who was sacrificed as a propitiation for the sins of the world.” The general call to repentance, so earnestly repeated in *all* parts of the New Testament, sufficiently shows that the merits of the great redemption are not, as many have supposed, confined to the regenerated by water at their Baptism, but remain, in their *full force*, to *all* who shall forsake their sins, and return to a good life by contrition.

Were it not so, wherefore did our Lord leave a power with his Apostles to remit the punishment for the transgressions of men ? Wherefore did he say, “ whose-soever sins *ye* remit, they *are* remitted unto them, and whosoever sins *ye* retain, they *are* retained.” These words, though they may refer *immediately* to temporal censures,



and the penal statutes of Moses, yet, according to the whole tenour of the Gospel, they respect the absolute forgiveness of all trespases through Christ Jesus.

The Church to which we belong hath sufficiently shown *its sense* in the matter ; and, therefore, after the confession of sins, hath authorised its ministers to pronounce pardon to the *truly penitent* ; and, in the service for the sick, hath given power to the Priest to declare an absolution of offences against God, upon *heartly* repentance.

A remark, however, is here to be made, that in these forms of *absolving* the minister doth not pretend to speak from *himself*. He does not assume an arrogant virtue from his *own* authority as a *person*, but from his *office*, as from Jesus himself, whose *servant* only he is, and as commissioned by *him* to publish to all who shall *repent* a return to the favour of God through his blood. “ We preach not *ourselves*, but *Christ Jesus, the Lord* ; ” and *we*



deliver the words of our Master, under a preconceived and full persuasion, “that the sinner’s repentance is sincere.”

The Reformed Church, upon this principle, hath ever condemned the *presumption* of the Romanist, who takes upon *himself* to pronounce pardon, to give a licence to sin by a dispensing power, and to *sell* indulgences for a bribe.

The Creed inserts a belief in “*the remission of sins,*” upon the *true* ground alone, “the Gospel.” It directs men to *one* fountain only, to him who died for *man, and was bruised for their offences.*

The substance of the three Articles, thus explained, is this :

“*I believe that Christ our Lord directed his servants to meet together, in remembrance of himself; and to associate as friends, under him, the Author of their faith. I believe, that, as this faith is but one, the assemblies in his name, or the Church, can be but one; that it of a natural consequence follows, that wherever the doctrines of the*

*great Redemption are preached, there the same Church, however remote the parts may be, must exist. I believe also, that the partakers of the same ordinances, under the same Master, must be united brethren in this world, and, through their head, will be admitted to everlasting fellowship in the next.*

*I believe, under the next Article, that the Church to which I belong had an authority, from the teaching of the Apostolical Faith, to declare a forgiveness of sins to all mankind, through the atonement and merits of Jesus Christ. I believe, that the nature of sin itself required such a sacrifice as he was, and that this was really made. I believe, that, at the entering upon the new covenant with God, through Christ, a baptism, the original stain of my nature was taken away; and, also, that my sins, since baptism, will be remitted upon my true repentance. I believe that in Christ Jesus alone, and in his word, this forgiveness is to be looked for, and not in the usurped authority of fallible*

*man. I believe, that this remission, promised through the blood of Christ, will be certain and effectual to me, if I shall love God and keep his commandments ; if I shall esteem, as I ought, the great price which was paid for my Redemption, and suffer that thought to reclaim it, as it were, by a new birth, after sinning, to a holy life."*



THE  
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,  
AND  
THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

—◆—  
ARTICLE VII.

—◆—  
A SERMON.





## SERMON VII.

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2 COR. v. 10.

*We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body.*

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MAN is found to consist of *two* parts, of different origin : *one* of a heavenly, the *other* of an earthly nature. One of *spiritual* extraction, and therefore *everlasting*; the other of mortal composition, and therefore *perishable*.

The spiritual and earthly, the corruptible and incorruptible, exist together for a given space of time, and then, by a separation, are disunited. The question with men is, *how* sins, which call aloud for vengeance, are to meet their punishment ; and, again, *how* virtuous conduct may receive and enjoy a reward.

The Apostle in the text gives a direct answer to this inquiry. He says, that *all* who have lived upon the earth must ap-

pear, *i. e.* be raised again from death, to stand in the presence of Christ, the appointed judge, and then to receive the reward of the things which were done in their *bodies*, whether *good or evil*.

This declaration is a full and explicit justification of the Article in our Creed, which is proposed to the belief of all Christians.

“ *The resurrection of the body.*”

A resurrection implies a *return* of what had ceased to have existence to a *new* life. The *body* of man is that composition of a frame raised by an Almighty Creator, for the reception of a spiritual resident, “the *soul*.” While this breath of Heaven remains in its assigned dwelling, the parts of that dwelling are *sensible*, or susceptible of feeling, and at the *will* of that spirit have all motion. When that animating principle shall *relinquish* its abode, the house which had contained it falls immediately into decay ; or death, as the effect of dissolution, comes. But during the time of the union between the spiritual and earthly

substances, *actions* were done, and what the mind, or spirit, conceived, the body executed by its members, or put into force by enjoyments. For *these* gratifications, or the deeds performed at the instigation of the soul, the Apostle says an account is to be given. This account is to be taken from the degree of *good* or *evil*, i. e. of obedience or disobedience to the will of God, either imparted to man by revelation, or inferred from the suggestions of reason. Reason is that intellectual gift by which, from natural impulse of conscience, or the inward thoughts of man's heart, he is directed to act according to the dictates of innocence, and a desire to please a superior.

This superior is God.

But if "things *done*" by man are the effects of mutual *co-operation* in the *mind* and *body* (for neither can act without the other, nor attempt any work singly or separately); if an account, as the text declares, be to be rendered before the tri-

bunal of Chris *hereafter* of what they have *jointly* committed. it is reasonable to conclude, that *after* their *separation* they must be *united again* for the award of judgment ; or the soul and body, which by death were, for a time, *set free* from each other, must be *brought together again*, to receive punishment or reward, blessing or misery.

If there be force in this way of arguing, and, as it appears to me to be simple and fairly deducible, shall appear so to yourselves, ye cannot but see the propriety of the Article of your Creed, “ *The resurrection of the body.*” Ye cannot but acknowledge that the compilers of the system judged wisely, as well as taught alarmingly, that, after death, we shall rise again from the dust, and our spirits *re-occupy* their former habitation, that they may be *both* answerable for, or sustain the consequences of, virtue or vice, of obedience or sin.

The difficulties thrown in the way of believers, and the doubts which have weakened the faith of men in general, who

are called upon to subscribe to this Article, have proceeded from the appearance of *impossibility*. They have argued, as from *themselves* only, and to suffer the thought to slip from their minds, “ that God is not man ; man is finite ; God is infinite ; ” *i. e.* the powers bestowed upon the creature are confined to very narrow limits of action ; those of the *Creator* are beyond all doubts. *His* will is his only law, and, at his pleasure, he can *create* and *uncreate* ; he can raise into being, and can take *that* away ; he can form out of no visible mass ; can decompose that mass, and bring it back again to the fashion he gave it. Not such is the ability of *man* ; for, except it be *first created*, he can reduce to order no matter ; except it be made *capable* of receiving his workmanship, nothing can be fashioned by his hand. Weak and proud, we stumble in this path ; and, on one side, unable to satisfy ourselves by reasoning ; and, on the other, presuming upon our understanding, we boldly *deny*, or at least *withhold* our



assent to what is not commensurate with the shallowness of our comprehension. But a humble Christian will argue thus :

*Did* God at his word, as the Scripture, his revealed will teaches me, say, “ Let there be light, and there was light : ” — “ Let the waters be divided, and the dry land appear : ” — “ Let the earth produce herbs and living creatures ? ” — Was man, after the Maker had said, “ Let us make man *after our own image and likeness,*” *really* made from the dust of the ground ; and was the breath of life poured into his nostrils ? If so, the *same* Creator, who ordered all these things, and they were done, must have a *power* over them, and dispose all things as shall be his own pleasure. If he made them from a mass of matter, which had no determinate figure before they were raised from it, and he shall be pleased to say, “ Let all these particles, for *a time*, separate again, and, at my will, be *re-united* in the *same* order,” shall it not be done ? Shall not his voice



be obeyed? Shall not the Almighty Author of the world, as the potter hath the power over his clay, unsettle and resettle what is his own creation?"

This is the way by which a *humble* believer reconciles to himself the great truth, "that he shall rise again from the grave, with the *same* vehicle of the soul as they existed in together for the journey of life." He acquiesces in submitting to the required Article of his Belief, from the just notion he entertains of Almighty Power, and the boundless ability of God, which no human being can aspire to ; or, however exalted he may be in the talents of his mind, or superior in the strength of his arm, can reach.

I might illustrate this doctrine of the resurrection of the body, by the allusion of St. Paul to the *vegetable* world, and argue from it the probability of a similar renewal. Plants shed their *leaves*, but their *root* remains to many, and the Spring from that is again clothed with its former beauty. Seed corrupts, and the earnest of corn appears, the blade: but it is the

*same* in substance, though bettered in condition. From this will grow the future harvest. "The fields from this," as the Psalmist says, "will sing."

But the argument from the *possibility* of this resurrection is highly supported by the consideration of many *Scriptural* communications. From what is recorded in *these*, satisfactory inferences may be drawn, and a *more than probable* assurance arise, "that there *will* be a resurrection of the body."

Did not the souls of the children, when restored to life by Elijah and Elisha, return to the very bodies from which they had fled? Did not Job say that he *knew*, i. e. was firmly and beyond all doubt convinced that, though worms should destroy his body, yet, in *his flesh* he should see God? "*Mine* eyes," says he, "shall behold, and not another," not a stranger's; "my own," i. e. the *very eyes* which were then in being. Was it to another body, or to that from which it had departed, that the spirit of the Ruler's daughter returned? Did Lazarus come forth, at the call of

Jesus, in the *same* body from his grave, though it had been in a state of putrefaction for four days? *Whom* did the widow woman of Nain receive again into her embrace, her *own* son, or in another form and substance? But, above all, did our blessed Lord, after he had been buried, rise again the *same man*, with the same bodily parts, so as to be acknowledged even by the doubting Apostle Thomas, who touched him, and put his fingers into the print of the nails, which had been driven through his hands and feet?

The resurrection, however, of the *same* body is to consist, as St. Paul congratulated himself upon, of some material *alteration*; of a change from its vileness to glory, from its mortal to an immortal nature. What this shall be is described in general terms only, and can, therefore, be in no other way conceived than as it hath pleased God to communicate it through the Apostle. All that can be learned is this: “that our at present *perishable* parts shall be

made capable of *everlasting duration*, and what is buried a *natural* shall be raised a *spiritual* body.

A short and obvious remark may here be made by us all. If our bodies are *thus* to rise, and we are to appear again in them before our Judge, and to account for the things “done” while we possessed them, it surely must be our duty, and should be our care, not to disfigure or defile them in any of their parts, lest the Judge should say to us, “I know you not.”

The last Article of the Creed most properly follows the foregoing; for it teaches what will happen after the resurrection, and into what state the body shall rise—“*The life everlasting.*”

This life must be necessarily supposed to include that of the *righteous* and the *wicked*; for our Lord said that the *former* should go into “life eternal,” and the *latter* “into everlasting fire.” The word “*life*” signifies *existence*; and this is either a blessing or a curse, as it is passed in joy or sorrow,

in pleasure or pain. *Everlasting* implies what can have *no end*. The future state, after the Resurrection, is described by our Lord as to consist of these *two most opposite* conditions. He, confirming all which is any where communicated upon the awful subject, declares, that it will be on that day when he shall sit in judgment, and the office of his merciful intercession for sinners shall be finished, that God will vindicate his dealings, especially the *present* appearance of an unequal providence, by a *full* display of his justice and righteousness. For *this* end there is to be a general assembly of *all* his creatures, who have lived and acted upon the earth, in their various characters of *faithful* and *unfaithful*, of the *righteous* and *wicked*, of the *repentant* and the *reprobate*. Impartial examinations will be taken in the face of *all*; sentences pronounced according to the degrees of obedience or disobedience; and so just shall every man's allotment be, that, considering what they had received,



and what they had *abused*, what they *had done*, and what they *ought* to have done, the whole assembly shall acknowledge the ways of the Almighty to be *just* and *holy*.

The most dreadful to the thoughts of man is the assurance, “that what our Lord shall pronounce upon every individual who hath had being upon earth must *remain*,” that it cannot be *reversed*, but must be decreed to stand “*for ever and ever*.” It hath been a deceiving practice with men to exercise a fanciful imagination, and to persuade themselves ultimately into a belief, that what they *think* is *true*. Thus various opinions have gone forth into the world respecting the *nature* and *duration* of future punishments, and many having taken upon themselves to question the *justice* and *mercy* of God, when it is said “that the offences in this present life are to be corrected by a condemnation to *eternal* pain,” have speciously represented the severity of God’s wrath by *figurative* descriptions. Thus, where the words *Hell* and *fire* are



used, they would make it appear, “ that these are merely *representations* of the punishment ~~which~~ is to be inflicted : and, because *fire* is the most *searching* of all elements, and impossible to be endured, conceive, that it is an apt *image* only of what is to be undergone by condemned sinners in the world to come.”

In answer to *such* reasoners it must be observed, that if there were to be no actual sensation of *pain*, there would be no occasion for the *resurrection of the body*, with changed and enlarged powers, both for the reception of the soul, or the sufferings for its deeds. If God, through his Son, hath declared to mankind, that they shall be *tormented*, in a second state, for the former hardness of their hearts, and impenitent conversation, particularly for *rejecting him*, who came to save them, what He, who “ cannot lie,” hath denounced, *must* come to pass, and all the terrors described in Scripture, both in their kind and extent, must be true. It is sufficient

for us all to be assured, that of *whatever nature* the punishment may be, it *will* be a punishment.

There is *one simple* way of reasoning for all men, which I would wish to recommend to your practice. God hath been pleased to express himself in precise terms, “ that the wicked in this life, who have trampled his commandments beneath their feet, acting in defiance of *reason, conscience, instruction*, and the laws of a *covenant* revealed to them ; who have, moreover, turned a deaf ear to the *Gospel of Christ*, consumed their bodies by sinful enormities, alienated their minds from all religious obligations, by contempt, open violation, and scorn, shall be *excluded from his presence*, and undergo, among the companions of *Satan*, the torments of his abode, *whatever* that may be, for the *same* eternity of time.

Happy would it be, did men suffer *such* thoughts to employ their hearts, and were led by them to forsake the ways of danger

and misery before they die. Let them be assured, “that God is not to be *mocked*,” and that if he has said, “I will avenge my honour,” the stroke of his indignation *must* fall.

But as the life of the *wicked*, as Jesus said, is to be passed in *everlasting pangs*, so is that of the *righteous* to be enjoyed in *everlasting bliss*.

The Scriptures, which, in this state of blindness, are our *only guide* in *all* things, in order to encourage men to seek God and to do his will, while they live, represent the recompence for their service by all the splendid and joyful figures which strike our minds upon the *earth*. The joys of heaven are exhibited under the emblems of *light*, the *sun*, and *stars*. The glory of them is compared to what constitutes *earthly* grandeur, crowns and thrones. The duration of them to such productions of nature as never fade away.

But all the happiness of the life to come may be comprehended in *this* transporting

prospect, “*we shall see God.*” We shall see *him*, who, possessed of all power and truth, created the world in which we are placed; the *firmament* above us, with all its brightness; the *earth*, with all its productions; the *sea*, with the immensity of its waters. We shall see *him*, who first appointed for us, and afterwards sent down from his own presence, the *great Advocate and Mediator*, to redeem man, *Christ Jesus*. We shall behold the *Saviour himself*, and be admitted to a partaking, with the heavenly messengers, of their songs, adoration, and praise.

While we are in our *flesh*, what do we endure? Diseases, casualties, pain, and death. Our *minds* share in the *same* afflictions, and distressful events sadden our days, bring us down with sorrow, and cause our tears and sighs to multiply. In the *realms above*, there will be no interruption, from any *such* causes, to the happy continuance of our eternal inheritance.

Who can permit *these* things to engage

his thoughts, and forego the delightful prospect, by continuing in *sin*? who rather will not strive to be good, “that he may entitle himself to the reward of the just.” I sum up the two following articles in the declaration of my faith.

*I believe that, as, at the dissolution by death, the breath of man, or the divine spirit, returns to God, who gave it, and the body to the dust from whence it was taken, so, at the day of final judgment, they will be both united, and restored to a new condition, which may render them capable of retribution, either of happiness or misery, according to deeds done, by their joint operation, in this life.*

*I believe that, as God is true, his denunciation of an eternity of pain, in whatever it may consist, to the wicked, or of bliss to the righteous, must be as he hath said.*

*I believe that, as the day of trial to all men will be past, God will sentence the unrepenting sinners to their punishment, and the faithful servants to their blessedness, accord-*

*ing to his justice and mercy. I believe, according to the belief I have in God, that he will be right in all his ways, and that his award shall stand.*



**RECAPITULATION.**



**A SERMON.**



## SERMON VIII.

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1 PET. iii. 15.

*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*

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To say “ I believe ” is expressed in few words, and easily uttered. “ To *believe* ” is a work of greater difficulty : because it presupposes a thorough acquaintance with truths, which require much time to examine, and no small degree of research to understand, the nature of religious knowledge, as it is more interesting than any other to acquire, so perhaps it demands greater pains satisfactorily to pursue.

In order to assist you in arriving at an acquaintance with the doctrines of your holy faith, I have endeavoured, in a series of many discourses, to point out its parts, and to show what is contained in the articles of your belief.

Having finished my exposition of the several points proposed for your acceptance as members of the Christian church, and attempted, however imperfectly, to explain them as they stand in their particular order, I thought it might not be unuseful to bring the whole in one view before you, and, by a general Recapitulation, to imprint them with a force of repetition upon your remembrance.—I took occasion to place before you the *three* objects, to which, by the command of Christ Jesus himself, ye are required to give your *unfeigned assent*: to the existence of the *Father*, of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*. I told you, that, when you profess to believe in the *Father*, you mean, “that there exists a Being of a nature far different from, and superior to yourselves, who has been *before* all things, through an essence belonging to Himself alone, from whence he is called *self-created*. This existence cannot come within our comprehension; but it *must* be true, because there must

have been a *First Cause* of all things, and this *in* all things is *God*.

This great Being, incomprehensible by *us*, is possessed of *all perfection*. He is infinitely *wise*, infinitely *powerful*, infinitely *good*, *just*, *holy*, and *true*. He, by his *own Word*, or, as St. John describes, his *Son*, called the visible world, consisting of the firmament, sun, moon, and stars, into existence. He made the *earth*, upon which we dwell, and caused it to bring forth gifts, grass, herbs, and trees. He formed *animals*, to live upon, and to be nourished, in their various kinds, by its productions. He created *man*, as the governor of these under his appointment ; and, for this purpose, breathed into him a *living soul*, making him like unto himself. not in figure of *bodily parts*, but *endowments of mind*. He commanded also the fowls to fly under heaven. At his word, the waters were gathered into one place, and the wide seas appeared. In them grew living creatures, and inhabited the depths of the flood.

Having thus *created* all things, he extended his actual *presence* every where ; and, at every moment of time, being the *Father*, the *Preserver* as well as the *Father*, the *Creator*. All these particulars are included in your assent, when ye profess to believe “ *in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.*” As *Christians*, ye believe in God the Father, in another sense, as the *Father* of Jesus Christ, through whom, as the *next* article teaches, ye are made his sons by regeneration and adoption.

The *second* Article of your faith is confined to a belief in your *redemption*.

The redemption was *promised*, and wonderfully *accomplished* by that extraordinary Person, in whom ye profess to believe, *Jesus Christ*.

The Creed gives you the *name* of this Redeemer, and points out the wonderful nature of his *relationship* with the Almighty, and his *dominion over redeemed man*. It shows by what *means* the salvation of the



world was wrought, and consequently the circumstances of *character*, in which *he* appeared who was to *effect* it.

I endeavoured to set all these *distinctly* before you, and to make them *plain* to the comprehension of the *most ignorant* hearer. I told you, “ that *Jesus* meant your *Saviour*, and Christ the promised *Messiah* ; ” that he was not merely, as *we ourselves*, a *creature* of God, but his *only Son* ; “ a Son, with whom no mortal being can claim a likeness, being of the *same* nature as his Father possesses in heaven ; that as he redeemed us, he has a right to demand our *service*, or to be called ” *our Lord*.

The redemption of man requiring an *atonement*, it was necessary, that, in order to suffer the wages of sin for man, *i. e.* *death*, he should appear in a condition capable of enduring the penalty. He was himself to become *man*, that, suffering as *such*, he might *redeem* man. Hence he, for awhile, left the seat of heaven, and, by a miraculous conception, expressed by the

words “ *he was conceived by the Holy Ghost,*” (a mystery not given to weak man to know,) was born of a *woman*, in the ordinary appearance of a human infant ; and, from the *singular character*, as well as *family* of his mother, fulfilled what had been all along foretold concerning his birth by prophets. After *he* had arrived at an age, when, according to the law of the Jews (among whom, being the posterity of *Judah*, as had been promised, he appeared), he was to begin the duties of a public ministry, he publicly assumed his character, attached to him followers, or disciples, taught heavenly and moral truths, explained prophecies and figures relating to himself, corrected the errors of all false sects among the Jews, and confirmed what he spake by the exercise of a *divine power*. He healed diseases at a *touch* ; raised the lame from their bed of sickness at a *word* ; recalled the breath into bodies which it had forsaken, and changed the substances of things into new forms and quantity.

He turned *water into wine*, multiplied a *few small loaves*, so as to refresh a *great multitude*, and caused even the *sea* to be *calm and still*. When he had given *sufficient* evidence, by his words and works, that he was the *Anointed*, or the *appointed Person*, who was to cancel the original sin of man, the time came that he was to offer himself by *bodily pain and dissolution*, as the great ransom for all. Hence the Creed inserts, that “ *he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, and was dead.*”

I made it my business, in explaining these several particulars, to show that Jesus *actually* endured *painful sufferings*; that he experienced *inward sorrows* from the obstinacy of sinners, and *torments of body* from the ill treatment of enraged enemies; that he was *wounded*; spat upon, insulted, and at length was fastened by his hands and feet, with nails, to a *cross*; that in *that painful* situation, his strength being at length exhausted, he languished, and gave up his breath. I remarked to

you, that it was necessary he should *die* in this manner; at this time “ *he suffered under Pontius Pilate,*” because he was governor over the *Jews*, appointed by the Romans, *their conquerors*, at *which* period it was foretold “ Christ should be cut off.” He was *crucified*, because it was a *Roman*, not a *Jewish* punishment, and inflicted upon *slaves*; thereby proving what Isaiah had said, “ that he should be rejected of men.”

I particularly remarked, that the word *dead* was inserted in the Creed, because, as without the *death* of Christ, there could have been no means of satisfying the *justice* of God, and consequently no *remission of sin*; it was necessary we should be assured that Christ *really* paid, by *dying*, the required price for our salvation. But not the *death* of Christ alone was expedient for the redemption of the world, but his *resurrection* also. All this is, *step by step*, learned from the Creed. Hence our Lord’s body, as was foreshown by Jonah’s confinement in the whale, and foretold in the

Psalms by David, was laid in a *grave*, at which time *his soul continued in a state of separation*, as the souls of *all* departed men are reasonably believed to be :—this is expressed by his “*descending into hell*,” or going to the invisible state of *all* spirits. From this state, on the day appointed, “the *third* day,” (which I mentioned to you was exactly conformable to the *mode* of reckoning among the Jews,) it returned to its body, and was re-united to its former dwelling, restoring it again, by its principle of life, to *sense* and *motion*. Jesus burst the bars of the tomb, and appeared, as he had *declared it should be*, alive again.

I did not pass this event by, because it is the *great pillar of confidence to man*, without an endeavour to place it upon a *strong foundation*. I brought together the *proofs* of our Lord’s resurrection, as they arose, in their order. I began with the *securing* the place, where the corpse lay, by a *stone*, by a *seal* of the governor, by a *band of soldiers*. I proceeded to the



pious office of the *holy women* in preparing spices for embalming their Master's body ; to their *surprise*, when they found the sepulchre open ; to *their looking in, and viewing the place*, where the Lord had lain ; to the *vision of two angels*, who told them that he *was risen* ; to their *haste*, that they might inform the disciples ; to the running of Peter and John ; to the appearing of *Jesus himself* to Mary ; to his coming on a *sudden* into the company of the disciples, who were assembled in *privacy*, and the *door shut* ; to the *testimony* he offered them, “ that he was *again* a *living man*, suffering them to *handle* him, and to *examine* the *marks* of the nails in his hands and feet ; to his granting to *Thomas* all the *evidence* he wished for, that he was a *man*, and the *same* man, suffering him to *thrust his fingers into his side*, which was wounded by a soldier's lance. I also directed your attention to the *singular* demonstration he gave, “ that he was, upon his rising again, possessed of the *divine*,



as well as *human* natures, perfect *God* and perfect *man*," by the miracle in the *draught of fishes*. *All which* matter, being brought together, was designed to strengthen your faith that Jesus did *really* rise from the grave, and that this body was *not taken* away by his *own friends*, as the Jews had the lying boldness to spread among the people. I admonished you to remember, that the *resurrection of Christ* is the *corner-stone* of your religion, for our *Lord himself* made it so; and that it is an earnest of you *own*, for *ye* also must rise again from death, after his example, "that ye may reign with him in Heaven." *Death* being suffered and subdued, and thereby the wages of sin being for ever cancelled, it could not be *necessary* for the Saviour's continuing any longer upon the earth, or dwelling among men. He, therefore, at *an appointed time*, in the *presence of his apostles*, was taken up by a cloud into the air, and returned to God, his *Father*, in the realms above. *He ascended into Heaven*,

*and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."*

In the explanation of *these* Articles, I drew your observation to the circumstance, that Jesus ascended in the presence of a *few* only, because they, who saw him go up, were afterwards to *preach it to the world*, and, therefore, *ought* to have been assured that there was *no deception*. They had been with him at all times *before* and *after* his death; they had *every* proof given them "that he was a *man*," and that *he* was *taken* up from them in *that form* while he was blessing them with uplifted hands, and talking in their company. They *hence* derived the *strong assurance*, which nothing afterwards could weaken, that their Master returned to his Father in a *human body*, and with all the properties of *man*, and could encourage converts to the Christian faith, in the persuasion that they also as *men* were capable of a translation to Heaven. This Article is of the greatest

importance and consolation to *us* all, who hope and look for another life.

I observed to you that the expressions “*was seated at the right hand of God,*” are an allusion to the ancient custom of princes, in the Eastern world, of placing men whom they wished to honour upon their right hand. It was a mark both of *respect* and of *power*, and, therefore, a *just* figure to represent that glory to which Jesus was admitted by his Father, when he came back to him in triumph over satan, sin, and death.

The Article “*from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead,*” is of most awful import, and, therefore, called upon me for an *earnest* exhortation to you, that you would bear it at *all* times in your remembrance. It forewarns you of the *judgment*; at that dreadful period of time it teaches you that Christ shall *again* appear, and, in all the solemnity of a *Judge*, summon the souls of men to a trial, as well of those who have, in all ages, *died*, as of

those who shall be found *alive* (or the *quick*) at his coming. I dwelt upon this alarming scene, and showed that *all men* would be judged according to their degrees of knowledge, as Heathens, Jews, or Christians, and according to their *works*. This *second* Article of your faith was circumstantially drawn out by the compilers of the Creed, because it contained the several steps which were necessary to lead to your redemption through Christ Jesus.

The *third* Article of your faith comprehends what ye are called upon to believe in the doctrine of the *Holy Ghost*.

As the *nature* of the Spirit, his *relationship* with the *Father* and the *Son*, consisting of the *same* essence and the different distinctions of Persons between them, are incomprehensible by us, and not to be demonstratively explained by man to his *satisfaction*, I remarked to you, that it must be no less a *presumptuous* than *useless* anxiety to pretend to more than is given us ; that it is both *folly* and *wickedness* not

to *believe* what the Scriptures declare to be *true*; that it is a mark of a *humble* mind to be *content* and to be satisfied; “that God would have granted us *greater* powers had they been *necessary* for our happiness here, or salvation hereafter.”

We learn the essential existence of the Holy Spirit from the title given him by our Lord, “the Comforter.” In *this* name we behold the *great Teacher*, the *Sanctifier*; the *governor of our hearts* by his grace or secret influence; the *controller* of our sinful passions; the *softener* of our sorrows; the *reconciler* to death; the *encourager* to meet our Judge at his day of retribution. We are therefore directed to *cherish* him in our hearts, and to pray “that he may never be *taken from us*.”

The remaining Articles of our Creed I told you were added as the distinguishing marks of *us* who are of the *Reformed Church*, and designed to correct the errors of the Romish and other dissenting establishments.



By *Church* I mentioned to you is meant the assembly of Christian people in the name of their Redeemer, and in faith of him to worship God. By *Catholic*, the *general* meeting of Christians, *wherever* they may be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

By the *communion of Saints*, the right of *fellowship* ; good will and charity among the true believers *here*, and the *enjoyment* of the company of all the blessed in *Heaven*.

By the *forgiveness of sins* I explained to you, was meant the certainty of all sins being remitted to us, even though they are committed *after* baptism, upon *true repentance*. This I told you was *denied* by some sects, who had no authority from Scripture for their assertion.

The *resurrection of the body* has been fully argued from *reason*, and confirmed from *Scripture* to you. It declares that at God's summons we shall arise from the dust again ; that our souls shall be re-



admitted into our bodies, being made by the power of God capable of receiving them ; and that in *them* we shall suffer *pain*, or be *rewarded* with *bliss*, as we shall die either in our sins or with unfeigned repentance.

*Lastly*, I set before you the declarations of Scripture concerning the *eternal nature of rewards and punishments*.

We are apt to encourage the notion of the former, and as apt to discourage the threatenings of the latter. But let us not cast such a veil before us by our own flattering modes of reasoning as to forget what our Lord said : “ The *wicked* shall go *into everlasting punishment*, but the *righteous* into *life eternal*.”

If this eternity *affright* us, it should be an argument to fly to our *hope*, “ our *redemption* ;” and to amend our ways, which will bring us to such misery before we die. It should be an argument to the reprobate to repent that they, through *Christ Jesus*, may be made happy.

I have in this manner expounded the *whole* of the Creed, and shall be sufficiently rewarded if I have opened your understandings, and shown you what it is “*to be Christians.*”

AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Lord's Prayer.*

*IN TWO PARTS.*

—◆—  
PART I.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON I.

---

St. MATT. vi. 9, 10.

*After this manner pray ye—Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.*

*Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

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JOHN the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, in order to prepare the way for the preaching of the great Messiah, had gathered to him a mixed multitude of disciples, and called upon them, in their different characters, to repentance and amendment of life. The followers who had attached themselves to him had received from their Master a *mode* for offering up *their prayers*, and had been taught a particular *form of words*, suited to the circumstances of *his* ministry.

The disciples of Jesus, afterwards, when he had begun his teaching, requested *him*

to give *them* also a *rule* for the petitions which *they* were to make, as believers in *him*.

Our Lord, in his usual condescension, and with a desire that both they and all who should become converts to his Gospel might address his heavenly Father in a manner most *acceptable* to *him*, and most *profitable* to *themselves*, was pleased to deliver to them a *compendium*, or summary of all such requests, which, both as men and followers of Christ, it was their *duty* to *ask* of God, and most *necessary* for them to *receive*.

This general sketch of human wants, and of the means whereby God might be glorified, being comprised in a few, but most *significant*, sentences, is called, by way of distinction from all others, in remembrance of its author, “*The Lord’s Prayer*.”

This being rendered familiar to Christians from the earliest days of their youth, and continued through their lives, as a



material part, both of public and private devotion, it is daily indeed in their *lips*, but its *meaning* often not thoroughly *understood*.

I shall take the present opportunity of explaining *some* of its contents in as plain a method as I can conceive, hoping that they who hear me may derive some knowledge from the explanation, in addition to what they *before* had considered as its general import. The *younger* part, as they possibly have paid no *material* attention to the subject, may draw from it *much*, and not *unuseful* information.

The great object of all universal worship is *God*. This Almighty Being, from the creation and preservation of the world, is revered under the name of *Father*. With *this*, therefore, the Prayer naturally opens. It is then distinguished into *three* parts ; 1. An *Invocation*, or calling upon the Father. 2. The *Petitions*. 3. The *Doxology*, so called from Greek derivation, signifying the *giving of glory*.

1. With respect to the *Invocation*, as I above mentioned, it begins with an appeal to the Author of all things, as the powerful and benignant Parent of us all, as creatures, and, therefore, in a common sense, styled *our*, or of *us*, as Christians, in particular. Under the *former* character we are his children by *creation*; under the latter by *adoption*, through his Son, Christ Jesus.

The dwelling of the earth, upon which we live, is found by every one subject to different kinds of imperfections, liable to change and misery, the seat of sin. We conceive that *such* a habitation is *unfit* for the residence of so perfect a Being, and, therefore, we assign to *him* a supposed place of all happiness, which we denominate *Heaven*. It is not to be drawn from hence, that we believe him to be essentially *absent* from *any part* of the world, which he made, but that there is *one* region separate from all other, where, in the company of spirits, superior in

nature and order to ourselves, he displays the brightness of his visible presence.

Under the awful veneration of the Deity, so encircled with glory, we naturally express *homage*, and a due sense of his holiness.—“ *Hallowed be thy name.*”

The *name* of God in Scripture, particularly in the book of Deuteronomy, where the Israelites are enjoined to swear by his *name*, has the same signification as *God himself*. To “*hallow*,” is to *make holy*, to *think of as holy*, to *pray to as holy*, to *act towards as holy*. This is said in contradiction to *ourselves*, who are the *unholy*, and therefore expressive of the great distance between him, who is to accept, and those who are to present their supplication, and shews *humility*.

2. The *Invocation* being thus made, the *petitions* follow, the chief object of all prayer.

These are *six* in number ; *two* respect the glory of God ; *four* the wants of men. The former are these : “ *Thy kingdom*

*come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."* I shall endeavour to give an explanation of these before I proceed to point out the latter.

"*The kingdom of God*" is used by us *here* in very *different* senses. The grand system of creation, in which all things, both in Heaven above, and in the earth beneath, move, and have their being, under the divine command and providence, is, in the *first* and *obvious* interpretation, *God's kingdom*.

The *knowledge* of *him*, as the sole Creator and Upholder of the universe, in opposition to the corrupt notions of *idolatry*, is in a second sense his *kingdom*. This knowledge, extended from the light of nature, or conscience, to the communications of himself to mankind, by *prophets* and *other inspired men*, and, *above all*, by his Son, *Christ Jesus*, so as to cause God to reign in the hearts of his creatures, is another meaning of the word *kingdom*.

Before the coming of our Saviour into

the world, it is well known that the dominion of sin and Satan had been spread through all unenlightened nations ; this was destroyed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, which was sent down, as Christ promised and foretold from Heaven, as a *free gift* of illuminating mercy to mankind, and, therefore, called *grace*. Where *this* operates it promotes the honour of the true God, and roots up all the established prejudices of idolatrous and erring superstition. This creates, as it were, a new people to the Almighty, and is implied in *this* prayer, under the term *kingdom*.

But the ultimate design of God in revealing himself to man, and especially in his suffering his only Son to come down from Heaven for their redemption, was that he might *reign with them in everlasting bliss* ; that his enemy, Satan, being cast beneath his feet, he might appoint the redeemed by his Son to sit round his throne for ever and ever. This is the *last* sense of the word *kingdom*—"the kingdom of future glory."



We pray that this kingdom may come, *i. e.* that it may proceed in its course, for the several purposes for which it was ordained—1st. That they who know not the *true God*, but worship *wood* and *stone* (as all the savage inhabitants of the earth), may have their eyes opened, and behold the Lord. 2dly. That all who know him in *creation*, may see him in *redemption*, the Father of all things made by him, and of Jesus Christ, whom he sent. 3dly. That the blessing of the *Holy Ghost* may confer the gifts of *grace*, and lead believers to a holy life. 4thly. That the *means* of *grace*, poured down on mankind, may so improve their earthly conversation, as to entitle them to a place in the assembly of *saints above*, when, at the consummation of all the divine councils, the new heavens shall open, and admit within their courts the souls of the righteous, for an eternal praise to him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

2. The next petition, which follows the “kingdom,” relates to the *will* of God :



“ *thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*”

The will of God is of *two* kinds ; 1st. His *secret*, or that by which, *known only to himself*, he regulates the administration of his universal dominion, and from before the foundation of the visible world, he determined at *what* precise period the firmament and the earth should come into being ; *what* æras should mark particular men and things ; in what state of mankind the Messiah should appear ; *how long* the gospel shall continue before the final completion of its promises ; and at *what time*, and by *what means*, the earth being dissolved, the creation of a *second* world shall begin. All *these* events, not having been imparted to the comprehension or information of man, belong to God’s *secret* or *uncommunicated will*.

2. The *second* kind of God’s *will* is the *revealed*. The private counsels of his own all-wise mind God was pleased, “ at sundry times and in divers manners,” as it seemed

*best to himself*, to lay open, or unfold to the sons of men. *Hence* the covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and other favoured personages of old were made; *hence* that especial light cast upon the understanding of prophets and seers: *hence* the notices in dreams and visions; but above all, after the *express* appointment of the Jewish religion, by the *visible* display of his presence on Mount Sinai, was to cease, the more *full* discovery of *himself* and *attributes*, by the coming and preaching of Christ Jesus.

If it shall be his pleasure to make any further communication of himself *hereafter*, all that may, in this way, be done, must be included in the word “*will*.” The subject of prayer is this, “*that it may be done*.” We pray, that if our Father shall have reserved to himself any plans for his government, which it is not permitted us to know, they may, at a *due season*, and in his *own wisdom*, be accomplished; that if they shall relate to the continuance, hap-

piness, or misery of our lives, they may come to pass ; that if they respect the day of our death, or appearance before him in judgment, we may meet them with resignation.

We pray also, that we may have the power to *do* the *will* revealed to us : *i. e.* that we may consult his *word*, under all the different dispensations ; mark the *progress of knowledge*, as it arose to the enlightened mind ; trace the various statutes and ordinances to their *causes* ; observe the several *injunctions*, shudder at the *threats*, embrace the *promises*, as well of the *old* as of the *new* covenant ; and use our earnest endeavours to accommodate their design to our actions, their tendency to our practice, their spirit to our faithfulness.

We further pray, that “ *the will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven.*”

When we consider the number of the stars, whose distance from our earth is immense, and they as endless to tell as the

sands of the sea, common reason suggests to us the magnitude of creation, and the boundless works of an Almighty hand. We hence, even without revelation, should argue that there must be other habitable spheres, and that they, who dwell in them, are of a nature adapted to their appointed station and allotments. But revelation *assists* our reason, and the Scriptures in various parts have told us, that there are servants of the Most High of a *different substance* from ourselves, and endowed with *spiritual* properties ; not, as our Lord defined them, consisting of *flesh* and *bone*, the texture of the *human* body ; but of more *pure* and *refined* qualities, suited to their immediate attendance upon the Almighty. These are expressly named his *messengers*, or *angels*, the ministers, or servants, to execute his commanded purposes ; whether they are to remain in his constant presence, to sing to their harps in songs of never-ceasing praise ; or, as there is every reason both to hope and think,

are despatched from the realms above to *defend good men upon earth*, to *comfort* them in all their trials, and in particular to *support* them under the agony of their dissolution. The Holy Scriptures speak of these messengers as having been *sent* upon various occasions : as at *the expulsion of Adam from paradise* ; to *Jacob in his dream* ; to go before the *Hebrews after their rebellious murmurs*, instead of God himself ; to *Balaam*, the soothsayer ; to the *armies of the Lord* against his enemies ; to the *three young men in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace* ; to *Daniel in the den of lions*, and to *others* in the *Old Testament*. Many also are the instances in the *New*—*Gabriel* appeared to *Mary*. The *angel* showed the will of God to *Joseph* in a dream. After the success of our Lord's temptation *angels* ministered unto him. In the garden of Gethsemane an *angel* comforted him. His resurrection was known, and the truth of his ascension confirmed, by *angels*. The apostles were set free from prison by an



*angel*; an *angel* struck Herod, and he was eaten up of worms. These several proofs establish the doctrine, that there *are* heavenly messengers who bear the commands of God.

If there *are* such, the next inquiry is in what *manner* they perform their appointed service, with *what* obedience they execute the charge committed to their hands? In the way of illustration, let us consider *what* constitutes a servant upon *earth*. *Who* is justly called a *good* servant to his master among men? Is not *he* who *respects* his *person*, preserves his *property* entrusted to him, hears him with *humility*, *orders* all things as he is *directed* with faithfulness; and despatches the business of his office with *readiness*, *zeal*, and *quickness*. If these be the amiable requisites of a servant to an *earthly* master, how much *greater* in their *degree* and *refinement* must be those which are the essential properties of the *heavenly*? If it be the characterizing mark of an obedient servant *here below* to hold



his master's person in veneration, it can require little force of argument to prove, that the *angels of heaven* must behold the face of their Almighty Lord with *greater fear and love*, for *he is all gracious, all holy, all powerful*. If it be a material part of a servant's duty to *listen* to and to *discharge* the appointment of labour which he has at any time in command from his master on *earth*, it must be in an unspeakable extent of service, in the ministers of light, to obey *him* with *fidelity*, whose message cannot but be at all times *just and right; benevolent* for the commissioned to *bear*, and *important* for the regularity of all created beings, whether they be as themselves *spirits* or mortal *men*. Lastly, if it be the true sign of a servant's office to deliver what is entrusted to his care with despatch, what can be thought must be the swiftness of the ministers who are compared to *fire*? As *that* element is most *searching*, and when fuel is prepared *quick* in its instantaneous effects, so must be the

rapid course of the angelic host, when *they* carry in their speed the behests of God.

Our Lord in his Prayer makes it a part of petition to our Heavenly Father, that *we* may be as *ready* to *minister* before him, to *serve* as *gladly*, as *faithfully*, as *free* in *our* steps, as the *angels* on high are who serve the *Lord*.

If the present congregation shall have derived any information, or satisfactory pleasure, from the explanation given of these *two petitions*, I shall have no scruple in requiring their attendance when, by God's blessing, I shall at this hour of the next Lord's Day proceed to the consideration of the *four* which remain.

AN EXPLANATION

OF

The Lord's Prayer.

IN TWO PARTS.

—◆—  
PART II.  
—◆—

A SERMON.



## SERMON II.

---

ST. MATT. vi. 11, 12, 13.

*Give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For  
thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for  
ever. Amen.*

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I SHALL now *resume* the explanation of the *Lord's Prayer*, and endeavour to set before this congregation the *four* petitions, which contain the general *wants* of *men*.

As it is the *first* and natural desire of all to be furnished with the means by which their existence upon earth may be rendered comfortable to themselves, and to the several branches of their family, it cannot but appear most reasonable, that in their address to the great God, who is the Author and Dispenser of every good, he would be pleased to bestow, with a kind

and bountiful hand, whatever is requisite for the convenience and comfort of their present condition. As *food* is the principal support of man's life, the first of these petitions makes a humble application to the Almighty, that he will afford to all who seek him their *ordinary substance*: “*Give us this day our daily bread.*” The word *bread*, though, in its first sense, it conveys to us the *single* gift expressed by the term itself, is of a more *comprehensive* meaning than many among us may imagine. It not only implies *bread* which we *eat*, and, under *that* name, *every* species of aliment, but also what is connected with the enjoyment of this *apparel* and *habitation*.

It would be but a *small* part of the support necessary for life were there wanting *clothing* for the protection of our bodies, or a *dwelling* prepared against the change of inclement seasons.

Man would live for himself only, or no societies or happy intercourse of civiliza-



tion be established upon the *earth*, were there a total want of *garments* to cover the limbs, or no security of an *abode* to shelter him from outward injury ; under the expression *bread*, therefore, are to be understood, in addition to the *literal* meaning, house and *raiment*. But further, it is not merely indispensable that these aids should be supplied, but that the *bodies* and *minds* of men should be preserved in *such* a state as to give them strength to *provide*, or gather by their *labour*, what the goodness of God thus places in their hands ; that they should have firmness of limbs to hew down the trees of the forest, and to cultivate their lands ; so that the fields may be full of corn, and the pastures of sheep and cattle.

This is sufficiently shown in that word of the Prayer, “ give.” For, although the produce of the earth be the *gift* of God, and *he*, in bountiful indulgence, dispenses it to his creatures, yet he requires *industry* on *their* part ; he calls upon them to imi-

tate the busy ant, and, from its diligent example, to rouse themselves from a *sluggish stupidity* to a *lively application*; to sow, if they mean to *reap*; to *employ* their hands, if they wish to *enjoy* the fruits of the ground. From God is to be expected a *blessing* only upon man's *endeavours*, not a *profuse abundance* upon his *indolence*.

As the texture of our bodies and tempers of our minds have occasion for constant *renewal*; and, as one day succeeds to another, call for a *continuance* for their common sustenance, in this petition is, with great propriety, added "*daily*." Many refined explanations of this word have been given, such as "day by day," sufficient for the coming day—"what is merely *expedient*, instead of what is *abundant*." It cannot, however, be more properly and significantly translated, than as it stands in the Prayer.

2. The next petition, with the greatest propriety, follows the former, "*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that tres-*

*pass against us,” or “forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*

In the *former* petition, prayer is made to the Father of all for his benign assistance to men, as his *creatures*. In *this* he is addressed for his mercy to *sinner*s. As men, we invoke him by the general claim of *preservation*; as *sinful* men, we sue for the pardon of *transgressions*. It is not necessary to dwell upon the entailed guilt of all who were born from Adam, and the inherent propensity in us all to evil. Both our own hearts and practices, which tend too often to sorrow and misery, convince us, “that we are and *must* be amenable to punishment, and the just objects of the divine wrath.” It must, therefore, be a *duty*, as it certainly is to our *interest*, to supplicate the offended Majesty of God, “that he will, at *all* times, be inclined to *spare*, when we deserve his *vengeance*; and to *remit* the severity of his indignation, when we *provoke* him by our crimes.” The *offences* of men are called by our Lord,

*debts*; and *offenders, debtors*; by which terms are to be understood, that sins committed, and sinners who commit them, incur a penalty, as a *debt* or *due* to them, from a merited and wronged avenger.

When this petition, however, is offered to the throne of all *compassion*, it should be remembered by suppliants, that it must be an inconsistency to implore the remission of wickedness, if bad men do not reflect with themselves before *whom* they prostrate their bodies, and how *just* and *holy* he is, who is to accept their prayer. A sinner, who has *no sorrow* for what he hath done, hath *no sense* of his miserable condition, nor a *desire* to *reform*, can have little pretence to ask for a veil to be cast over his unworthiness. Unless the *heart* be penitent, the *words* of the *tongue* can be expected to have but little avail with him who is of purer eyes than to behold determined iniquity.

The *second* clause of this petition is most highly deserving of regard. It teaches

the obvious obligation imposed upon men, however *unwilling* they may be, from the feelings of injuries received, or from secret prejudices, springing from any source, to be forward in overlooking *faults against themselves*. A readiness to display that forbearance and forgiveness to our *neighbour*, when *he* offends, must well become *us*, when, in the house of God, we fall upon our knees, lift up our hands, and beseech with our lips, that an all-merciful Father will avert the stroke of *his fury* from *our own head*.

The necessity of this temper is so strong, that our blessed Saviour, when he had repeated the Prayer to his disciples, was pleased to *mark* the injunction, by an express *addition* to what he had before delivered. “*If,*” says he, “*ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.*”

With how blind a presumption then must all unthinking dissemblers approach the footstool of God! With how contra-



dictory lips must they repeat the Prayer of their Master and Saviour, when, at the moment of utterance, they hope for a *blessing* to themselves, and yet inwardly harbour a rancorous *hatred*, or, perhaps a deadly *curse* against their neighbour! Our Lord thus remarked of similar hypocrites in his time: “In *vain* do they worship.” There can subsist no difference whether this Prayer be said in a private chamber, or in the public temple, as to the *frame* of *heart* which ought to accompany it; for the eyes of God are equally true in discerning sincerity, whether it be presented to him in the *closet* or a *congregation*. A malicious man can, therefore, have no more *real* access to his Almighty God, than the vilest reprobate; if he bears “*war* in his *heart*,” it will be of no use that his “*words* are smoother than *oil*.”

3. The next petition has in view the *state of trial* to which all mankind are exposed, as the *test* of their *uprightness* and *self-denial*—“*Lead us not into temptation.*”



The term *temptation* is made use of in this place by our Lord, as it is also in most parts of Scripture, to signify any *dangerous attempt* which may be made, either from the solicitation of our *own corrupt hearts*, or the allurements of *bad examples*, to draw us off from our integrity. Whatever *person* or *thing* shall have the power to *weaken* our steadfastness in virtue, or, for a moment, to create a *wavering mind*, so that, in the *end*, our innocence may be *forfeited*, may be said to *tempt*.

Thus the evil spirit made his deceitful approaches to our blessed Saviour in the wilderness ; the *design* of all his *artful* proposals was to *tempt* him to *sin*. And our Lord, in his baffling reply, said to him, “ *thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*”

Upon another occasion also Jesus applied the expression in the *same* sense. When at the time of his agony in the garden his disciples, from fatigue and sorrow, had fallen asleep, he called to them, saying, “ rise and pray, lest ye enter into *temptation*.”

These references are of *themselves* sufficient to show what is contained in the word *temptation*, as found in this Prayer. But *trial* is *not to be dispensed with*, if the *genuine* nature of religious virtue is to be *known*. *Gold* is tried in the *furnace*, and the *valour* of the *heart* is confirmed by *dangers*. Why then should we pray that we may not be *tried*, or *tempted*? The answer is, that we *do not* pray against *trials themselves*, but that God would give us a *power* to *resist* them; his *presence* in the suffering; and his *arm* in *overcoming* them; that our faith may remain *unshaken*; that, as Abraham was, when it shall be his pleasure to put our fidelity to the proof, we may be obedient, and not stand *alone*, bereft of *his providence* to sustain us.

Thus the Apostle says in his Epistle to the Hebrews, “ God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be *tempted* above that ye are *able*; but will, with the *temptation*, make a *way* also to *escape*.”

To this interpretation we are brought by

the word *lead*, i. e. *bring* us, either by an unsuspected surprise, the proneness of our appetites, or the false colouring of wicked companions, into such snares, as, when thou art absent from us, may entangle our feet, and cause us to fall.

4. The last petition is closely connected with the foregoing, "*but deliver us from evil.*" It seems to have this consequent signification: "Not only, O Father, lead us not *into temptation*, but *save* us in this *time of danger.*" The word *evil* admits of *two* interpretations. It is either intended to comprise all the troubles which may destroy our happiness, whether of body or mind in *general*, or is confined to the *author* of them, "*the evil spirit.*" If the *former* be the right meaning, we pray against *evil things*; if the *latter*, against the *Evil One*.

*Evil things* are as numberless almost as the sand of the sea-shore. They comprehend whatever may affect the *well-being* of all mankind, whether they relate to *prosperity*, *freedom* from dangers and misfor-

tunes through *accidents*, or the *health* of our limbs, and even *death* itself. When these things shall be unfavourable and afflicting ; when worldly affairs shall miscarry ; when casualties shall throw us down ; when sickness shall deprive us of former vigour, and bring on gradual *dissolution*, who will not be ready to call them “ *evils*.” The “ *Evil One* ” requires no studied proof that *he* merits the denomination. If the success of Satan’s first temptation was an *evil*, if the trials he has from *that time* pursued, in order to draw off mankind from all duty to their Maker, be an *evil* ; if the attempt he made to *frustrate* the merciful design of the Almighty in sending his Son from Heaven, by insidiously exciting Jesus to *rebellion*, to a *distrust* in *God*, to a wicked *presumption*, and, what had been the cause of his *own* fall, to an impious *ambition*, be “ *evil* ; ” if, after the Gospel had been preached by its heavenly Author, and, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, spread, through the labours of the Apostles,

among remote nations, he raised *all opposition* to its *progress*, and has *never* ceased to allure the generations of men to *every sin*, be “evil,” then, with *justice*, may he be called the “*Evil One*,” and be a *proper subject of deprecation*, when men join in prayer to their Maker. From this *thing* or *person* we pray, as our Lord taught, that we may be *delivered*.

When *such enemies* endanger our safety, *what* petition can be more agreeable to reason than *that* which implores a *rescue* from them; a *powerful intervention* to counteract their malignant influence; a *hope* to disappoint them; a *stay* to repel them? In these trials *God alone* can be the fortress and deliverer; it is, therefore, wisdom to apply to him as the great defender.

Having, in *this* way, endeavoured to illustrate the *Petitions* in the Lord's Prayer, I shall pass on to the *Doxology*. *This* word is of Greek derivation, and signifies the *giving glory to God*, by acknowledging



and declaring his universal dominion, his uncontrollable and boundless authority, and, what must be the *natural result* of these, his *praise* and *honour* through *all* the world, in *all* ages ; among *all* nations ; at *every* period of time, in its course, and the constant succession of it, from *everlasting to everlasting*—" *for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.*" To thee, our Father, do we open our hearts, and beseech thee to *hear* us, because *thou* art the Sovereign Ruler ; because in *thee* dwells the *ability to grant* all we ask ; because, as long as the sun shall endure, the blessings conferred upon man, created and redeemed, shall be to *thy praise*.

It is to be observed to you, that this *last* part of the prayer, "*the Doxology,*" is *omitted* by St. Luke, and that *some* of the Church Fathers have, upon *that* account, left no explanation of it. But this is no *proof* that it did not constitute the part, as placed by St. Matthew, in his prayer ;



for, as may be shown in many instances, the Evangelists, either for *brevity*, or to prevent the suspicion of *writing in concert*, passed over many circumstances recorded by each other, so that what *one* had inserted was not witnessed by *another* in his writings. If, however, it were *not so*, there are as many advocates of ancient authority for it as against it; and, in *itself*, it is perfectly agreeing with the spirit of the invocation, and the several petitions contained in the Prayer.

The whole concludes with a solemn word of assent—*Amen*. It was the usage of the Hebrews to conclude their forms of supplication with *this* emphatical expression. It implies an unfeigned intimation, “that the *heart consents* to what the *voice* hath uttered;” it is, as it were, a *seal* to the *truth* of what hath been just before spoken; it *retraces* the several steps of the petitions, and *confirms* the contents by a full approbation, as thus: when we call

upon God the Father to *hear* us ; when we lay open the secrets of our *hearts* before him ; when we pray for his great and kind protection, grounding the whole with a full reliance upon his *power* ; before we have finished, we add this short and comprehensive *acknowledgement* of our soul : “ *We thus have prayed, because we have an assurance that what we ask is according to our real wants, and will be to the furtherance of thy glory.*” Thus have I attempted to *expound*, in as *familiar* and *easy* a way as I could judge of, and yet in a *full* manner, that important and comfortable form of prayer which was given by Christ Jesus to his disciples.

There is in its *spirit* and *contents* so expressible a *signification*, that, whenever it is repeated, it raises a fresh *delight* in every thoughtful bosom. It will be a sufficient reward for my labours in this *brief exposition*, if ye who hear me shall better understand its meaning ; and, whether ye offer it in private, or with

your fellow Christians, in praising God, ye shall find your desire of worship more strong, and the ardour of your devotion increased.

END OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.



AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Litany.*

*IN FOUR PARTS.*

—◆—  
PART I.  
—◆—

A SERMON.





## SERMON I.

---

ST. MATT. vi. 13.

*Deliver us from evil.*

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THE *duty* of *prayer* must be acknowledged by *all* men who are sensible of their own *weakness*, and acknowledge themselves *dependant* on a superior Creator.

It is not, however, in the *power* of all to *express* what they *wish*, or to frame their *words* according to their *necessities* or the *feelings* of their *hearts*.

*Prayers* are of *two* kinds : first, such as are offered to *deprecate*, i. e. to pray for *deliverance* from *evils* ; or to *supplicate*, i. e. to offer petitions for the *attainment* of *good*.

The *Psalmist* was at all times *earnest* in his application to God for his favour, or the hearing of his requests : “ *Hear my crying,*” says he, “ *O God ; give ear unto*

*my prayer."* The *learned* and *upright* men who formed the *Liturgy* of our Church, *i. e.* the *substantial compendium of service*, by which the Reformed Christians of the English Establishment may worship their Maker in the name of Jesus Christ more *purely* and *readily*, thought proper to draw up a kind of *summary*, by which petitioners, in their application to the Almighty, might entreat him to *avert* his *anger*, and *pour* upon them his *blessings*.

This *form* is comprehended in that part of the Church service which is called the *Litany*.

The word *Litany* signifies a *rule of prayer*, and is derived from a Greek word bearing *that* meaning. When, therefore, it is appointed to be *read*, it is the business of all who *hear* to consider it as containing what they ought to *pray against* and *for*, *i. e.* to *avert evil*, and to *obtain good*.

There is a regular *chain*, as it were, of prayer in this composition ; and I shall

earnestly wish to imprint *each* part, as they follow, upon the minds of this congregation; and, that ye may understand the connexion more *easily* and *comprehensively*, it may be *proper* to turn to the *particular parts* in your Book of Prayer, and *accompany* me as I shall give the *explanation* of *them*.

It should be remarked to you, that a *particular mode* of application to the throne of the Divine Mercy was, in *some way or other*, made use of by the primitive believers, in the early ages of the Church, and received both *alterations* and *additions* as they were peculiarly calculated for the *state* of Christians, who, either in their *moral* or *political* character, were to make them the subject of their addresses to the great Creator of all mankind.

Conceiving it of *little* or *no use* to you who are now present to mention at what *particular periods* the form of the Litany was *changed*, and with what *difference used* in the course of the public service, or the

*appropriate place* where it was *read*, either *before the altar*, or in the most *central spot*, and not, as *now*, in the general mass of ordinary prayers, I shall, as of *most consequence*, direct your minds to its several *parts*, and draw your attention to the discriminating subject of the *several* connected sentences. These, *from constant usage and familiarity*, which are well known to deface first impressions, may, in *some* degree, have escaped *your* observation.

The *Litany*, as ye, if ye *accompany* me as *I set out* and *proceed*, will find, opens with a *general confession* “that we are amenable to the wrath of God, in consequence of our *inward infirmities*—the *weakness of our nature*, and the *contraction of actual guilt*.” We approach the Majesty of an offended God, acknowledging ourselves *sinner*s.—“*O God*,” &c.

In the *next* place it is to be observed, that God is called upon in the *same three-fold* character, as represented by our blessed Saviour, and standing in the doc-

trine of the *Trinity* :—the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*. Under *each* name God is entreated to *hear*, and, according to the character of the several *Persons*, of whom the *One God* consists, to have *mercy*.

The *great design* of this *Invocation*, or the calling upon God to lend his ear, is the *remission of sin*.

As *all sin* naturally (from the *first curse*) subjects the guilty transgressors to the punishment denounced for the breach of the divine laws, the *first petition deprecates* or prays to *turn away vengeance*, as well as that which is justly due to every *individual transgression of each* suppliant, as to the offences of *all* human beings, upon whom antecedent or *once committed* wickedness may by *inheritance* entail a penalty from their descent or generation.

“ *Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers.*”

After this *general deprecation* or entreaty to turn away wrath, follows a series of



such *evils* as the life of man is most commonly found to experience, and *from* which mankind cannot but earnestly wish to obtain a *deliverance*.

That the several Articles, as it were, of *collective* evils may make a stronger impression upon the hearts of suppliants, they are not *confounded together* in a complicated mass, nor classed with each other in *one long body* of prayer; but, that they may not be of a burthensome weight to the mind, are frequently *interrupted* by a humble request to God, “that he, in *his* goodness, would *deliver* them who pray to him from the *sufferings* of them.”

“*Good Lord,*” we say, “*deliver us.*”

You will take notice from the *Litany*, that the *first and principal cause* of sorrow and trouble to man is *sin*. All wickedness proceeding from the wiles of the tempter subjects those who fall into his snares and delusions to the just indignation of God, and the danger of eternal rejection by him. It is therefore the natural beginning



of all prayer, “ that we may *escape* from the *toils* themselves which Satan lays for our feet, and their dreadful consequence—  
“ *everlasting damnation.*”

In the *next* place, the *general* subject being despatched, the worshippers, as we are, descend to *particulars*.

The prayers in *this* kind are of *two* natures. The *first* respect our *own* minds and bodies only ; the *second* relate to ourselves and others, as connected with us in the bonds of *society*, or members of *one country, Church, or condition*.

With respect to the *mind* supplication is offered, “ that it may be taught *humility* ;” that it may conceive and entertain notions suitable to the weakness of its condition ; may shun *pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy* ; i. e. that it may not *wilfully* cast such a shade over its own eye, “ *that seeing it may not see* ;” that it may not encourage *self-sufficiency*, and think too highly of its own *endowments* ; that it may not be puffed up with *self-conceit*, and assume a *vain*

*title* to an importance which it cannot *maintain* ; that it may not claim a character for extraordinary *virtue* and *uprightness*, the foundations of which are as visionary as the empty shadows of a dream, and, “ when weighed in a just balance, must be found wanting.”

As the happiness of man in the intercourse of society must consist in a forward disposition to *peace* and *contentment*, it is prayed, “ that no desire of another’s possessions (*envy*), no implacable resentment (*hatred*), no injurious wish (*malice*), no unkind interpretation of another’s words (*uncharitableness*), may ever draw us aside from *that duty* which a *neighbour* owes to his *friend* or *brother*.”

*These* are the mischiefs which arise from the *heart*, and, therefore, are the *first* objects of prayer, “ that they may be *averted* from *man* by *God*.”

To *these* are naturally added the mischievous *consequences* which arise from *practice*.

The indulgence of *all passions*, which carry men forcibly away to the commission of *crimes* expressly forbidden by God's commandments, entails upon a very considerable part of mankind the misery of *remorse*. It is, therefore, a request well worthy of the lips and supplication of all men, that the merciful Maker of his creatures would *turn their hearts aside* from a compliance with those *unchaste* desires which may expose innocence to the pollutions of vice, and induce them to forego the *sanctity* of their *frame*, which God requires to be *holy* and *without blemish*, as *he is holy*. Obedience to the *appetites*, for the most part, is encouraged by the *deceitful pleasures* which are vainly presented with a varnished outside to the yielding mind. An earnest supplication is therefore made in the *next* clause of the Litany, that *resistance* may be made to the *deceits of the world*, the inclinations of the *flesh*, and the solicitations of the *evil spirit*—"the *deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil*."

The *internal* dangers arising from the influence of the *passions* being thus *expressed* and *prayed against*, the *external* most properly follow.

The *outward evils* are *they* which proceed from the *jarring elements*, and in their course bring on *unlooked-for destruction*, *lightning and tempest*, *epidemical diseases*, or such as, in the likeness of a blighting wind, pass through nations, “*Pestilence* ;” scarcity of food, and failure of *corn* from unfavourable seasons, “*Famine* ;” the havock of war, “*Battle* ;” the private injury of man, “*Murder* ;” and, above all, *untimely dissolution*, not looked for, nor provided against, “*Sudden death*.” From the calamities brought upon life by these *natural* and *accidental* causes, the thoughts of the suppliant are turned to those which may arise from *citizenship*, and the necessary connexion with others in the same community.

As tranquillity in general rests upon the quiet *submission to established government*,

God is, in the *next* portion of the Litany, entreated to defend his people from the *open* and *treacherous* designs of *bad subjects*—"from all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion."

And as the *peace* of the *Church* is necessarily connected with that of the *state*, a prayer is offered against *divisions*, and all *new* principles in religion—"false doctrine, heresy, and schism."

The great obstacle to all improvement in morality and religion is an *unwillingness* to *hear*, to *regard the voice of God*, and to *repent*. This part of the Litany, therefore, closes with a petition, that God would take away "*all hardness of heart, and contempt of his commandments*."

The *petitions* being thus made, and an earnest supplication offered "that all these evils may be *averted*," the *foundation*, upon which a reliance is built, "that what is *thus* prayed for may be heard," most properly follows: this foundation is *Jesus Christ*.



Under *this* confidence the whole life of the Saviour is brought into view ; his miraculous *Conception* ; “ *the mystery of the holy Incarnation* ; ”—his Birth ; “ *his Nativity* ; ” the rites of the law, performed upon him in his infancy, and consequently his *initiation* into the Jewish covenant, as a descendant from Abraham ; “ *his Circumcision* ; ”—the declaration of his *divine mission*, by the *water* of John, and the descent of the *Spirit* upon him in the river Jordan ; “ *his Baptism* ; ”—the preparatory exercise for entering upon his public ministry ; “ *Fasting* ; ”—the trial of his integrity by Satan ; “ *Temptation*, ”—when he baffled the arts of the evil spirit ; “ *his Sufferings* ” in the garden of Gethsemane, before his death ; “ *his Agony and Bloody Sweat* ; ”—his pangs at his crucifixion ; “ *his Cross and Passion* ; ”—the departure of his soul from his body ; “ *his Death* ; ”—his body lying for a time in the earth, when committed to the grave ; “ *his Burial* ; ”—his breaking the bands of death in a tri-



umphant manner ; “ *his glorious Resurrection* ; ”—his return, after forty days, in a visible manner to his Father in Heaven ; “ *his Ascension* ; ” and upon *that* return the sending down the *Holy Spirit*, as he had promised, in the character of the Comforter, to aid his Apostles, and, through them, to teach all nations ; “ *the coming of the Holy Ghost* .”

These *merits* being humbly claimed and appealed to as the *ground-work* of *all* his prayers, the suppliant further entreats the Almighty, “ that the *effect* of them may extend to all the great events of life, and the terrors of death ; that they may communicate assistance and comfort in affliction, “ *in all time of tribulation* ; ” support in the season of *prosperity*, when, elated with riches and power, the mind is frequently disposed to think too arrogantly of itself and to forget God, “ *in all time of our wealth* ,” be at hand at the awful moment when the present world is to be left, and dissolution of body shall come,

“ *in the hour of death ;* ” and, lastly, plead in behalf of sinners before the dread tribunal, when Christ, the Judge, shall summon the souls of all into his presence, and sentence them to joy or sorrow, as the actions of life shall have been good or evil, and they penitent or impenitent before they died, “ *in the day of judgment.* ”

Such is the substance of the *former* part of the *Litany*. I shall take occasion to show the meaning of the *latter* part, and its particular sentences, as occasions shall hereafter arise.

In the mean time I could wish the present congregation would give the explanation I have above attempted to set before them *some* place in their thoughts.

I could wish you to dwell upon the subject of *each* evil, which you pray God to remove at a *distance* from you ; to meditate upon their *nature*, and to reflect seriously upon the suffering they would create, should they, or either of them, singly fall upon you. Think with yourselves, that if

one of them would *afflict* you, what would be the effect of *more* ; or, lastly, what the terror and destruction would be, if they *all* should be *united*, and crush you by their weight. They would bear you down as a flood. If to avert these things be in the hand of God alone, ye must see great reason for these sentences in the Litany itself, and be grateful in your remembrance of *their* labours who, in past times, composed it for *themselves* and for *you*.

I trust that, hereafter, ye will give full attention, when this most material part of worship is *read* in the morning service of the Church, and be careful to observe the *connection* and *importance* of the individual supplications.

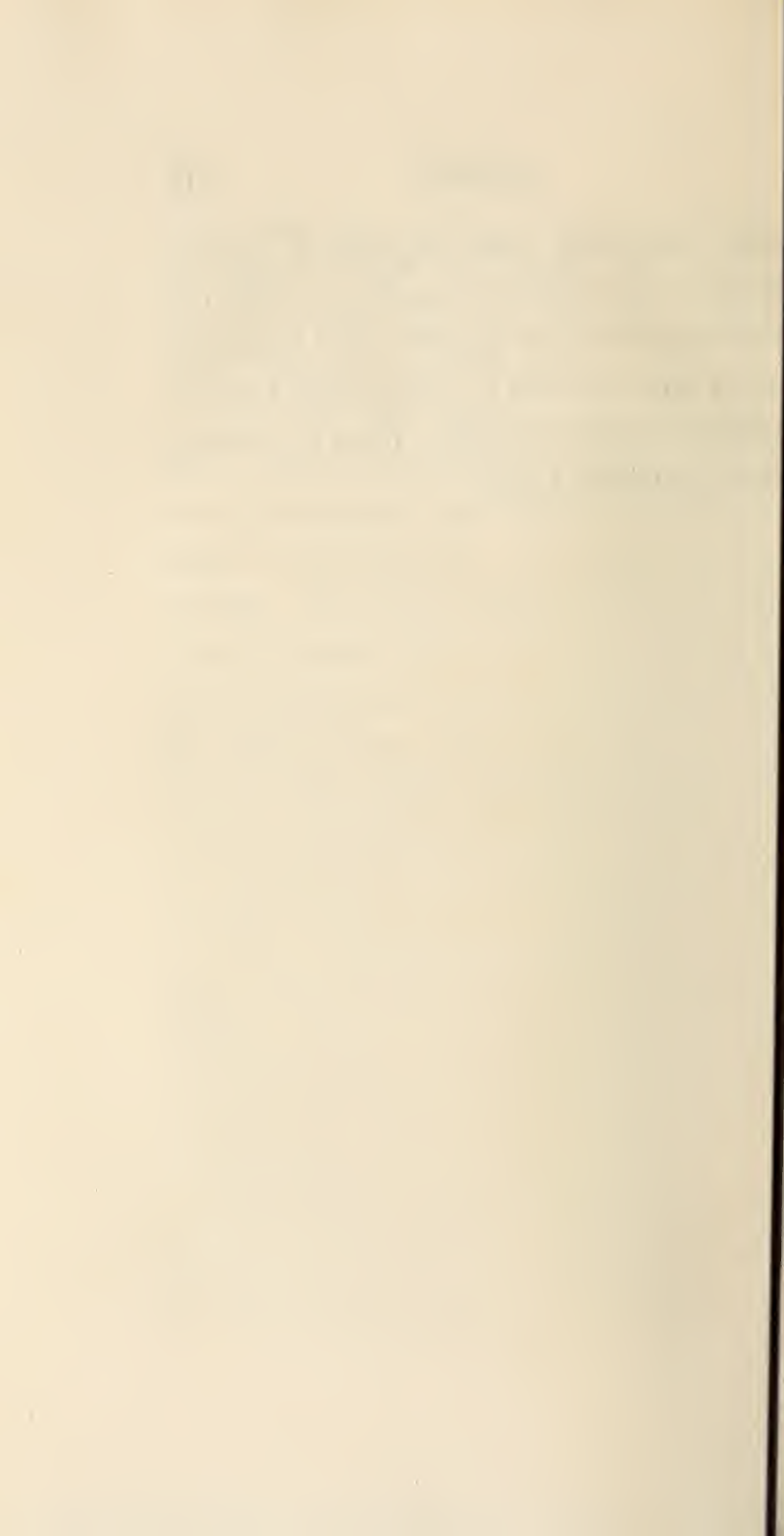
In *this*, as well as *other* parts of our sacred worship, familiar usage is found to render hearers in general *less attentive* than they *ought* to be to the meaning of many truths, which are proposed to them as just subjects for prayer or thanksgiving. Many among us are brought to the house of

God, and the celebration of his sabbath, by a *generl habit and custom*, rather than from a *serious regard* for our indispensable duty, and pious consideration.

It is with the view to *correct* this mistaken form of serving our Maker, that I have put together this concise, and yet, I hope, comprehensive illustration of the Litany. My object is that *words* may not convey *sounds* alone, and not a *meaning*; or the *outward ear* only be struck, and not the *inward heart*; that every one of you who in this place shall fall before his Maker, and pour forth, in the act of humble supplication, the labourings of his fearful or distressed breast, may know *what* the prescribed *form* for his prayers *implies*; and not utter expressions *empty* and *vain*, having no more weight than the blasts of air which pass through the sky away, and are heard no more.

May we all, understanding the Scriptures as they are taught and read according to the Established Church of this country;

and, complying with the *forms* of its reasonable and sincere worship, so feel the *real* import of our prayers, that God may at all times be with us, and imprint an assurance of his acceptance upon our *hearts*, through Christ Jesus.





AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Litany.*

*IN FOUR PARTS.*



PART II.



A SERMON.



AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Litany.*

*IN FOUR PARTS.*



PART II.



A SERMON.



## SERMON II.

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PHIL. iv. 6.

*In every thing by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.*

---

ST. PAUL, in this address to the converts at Philippi, gives them a catalogue of many general exhortations. False teachers had arisen in his time among them, and had made it their object, if it had been *possible*, to draw them off from their *new* faith, and to bring them back to the ceremonies of the Jewish law. In opposition to these judaizing zealots, he proposes his *own life* and *manners* for their conversation, and admonishes them to follow the *same* earnestness as he had shown, to obtain the prize of the great calling in Christ Jesus. He tells them, that he had but *one* end in view, the *same* to which *they* were

baptized, the looking for the coming of the Saviour, the *Lord Jesus Christ*; and that they might not *fail* in the *means* of obtaining the reward of their race, he presses upon them the duty of *prayer* and *supplication*. “In *every* thing,” says he, “by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.”

Having, in a *former* discourse, endeavoured to explain the *first* part of that general Compendium, which was drawn up by the compilers of the *Litany*, as a proper form of *deprecation*, I thought I could not build the *second* part upon a better foundation, than the recommendation and authority of the text. I shall, therefore, convinced of *this duty*, as advised by St. Paul to the Philippians, proceed to show how much we are indebted to our wise ministers, or governors of the church, who, by great labour and with much thought, brought together in so small a compass a catalogue of wants which fall to the lot of man, and call for the goodness



of God, when he is asked for them, to bestow.

It was my wish, in the *former* explanation, to show the natural gradation from the *first invocation* and *address*, and from the *sins* and *calamities* which we all have reason to deprecate and dread, to the foundation of our *hope*, “that the prayer, which we offer, will be *accepted* ;” and *that* is, the *mediation* of *Jesus Christ*, the efficacy of whose blood extends from the different situations of the present life to death itself, and to the final day of rewards and punishments.

I pursued each particular evil which may break forth upon us ; pointed out the *propriety* of the *order* in which they were classed ; stated the *reason* for an appeal to the Saviour, in the wide and comprehensive enumeration of his merits, and *applied* the usefulness of such entreaties, through his name, to the most *important* concerns of man.

I shall *now* proceed to draw your atten-

tion from the *evils*, which we so anxiously pray to *avoid* and *shun*, to the *good things* which we are naturally desirous to *enjoy*.

1. The *first* object of *supplication* in this *second* part of the Litany, and of course adapted to the condition of sinful men, is, *to beseech the Almighty God*, that the society of *Christians* may remain and prosper upon the earth ; that the religious assemblies incorporated in the faith of *Christ* through all the nations of the world may *continue* as it is at present established among believers ; and that they may rest upon the *truth* of its *doctrines*, and the *purity* of its *morality* and *precepts*.

The sentences which *distinctly* contain some *particular* request, are marked as they are pronounced by a *particular* address to the Giver of all good things, as in the *former* part of the Litany ; the several petitions of the Prayer are, therefore, abruptly broken off, “ by our beseeching the Lord our God to hear.”

“ *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*”

2. The next petition most *naturally* follows : it is an entreaty that God will be pleased to protect the Church of Christ, and its doctrines in general, wherever it may be planted in the whole world. To *this* care is subjoined the wished-for preservation of that *Governor*, who, being placed at the head of *these* dominions, supports the *established* religion, and indeed *all* worship of Christian people, by his authority ; and, what is of *infinite* advantage to the spreading of religion itself, sets forth the full belief he professes in Christ’s Gospel by his *own life* and the *brightest example*.

To this end, the sinner beseeches his Maker, that the defender of Christianity, in all quarters where his power is known, may be at all times confirmed in his own faith ; pay honour to God’s glorious name, by sincere worship in the service of his sanctuary ; and put on that pure frame of mind which, in all seasons, may dispose

the Almighty to continue his days in holiness and virtue.

And as the great requisites for these are a *fear* of God's *displeasure*, and an *admiration* of his *goodness*, "*a confidence in his power, and a desire to promote his kingdom among men,*" it is added by the petitioner, "*that the king may reverence, love, trust in (or have affiance in), and cherish in his heart, his honour and glory.*"

3. But as nations draw the sword against nations, and the peace of one is often most injuriously disturbed by another, and that the safety of the Church may remain unshaken, and rest securely under his wing, the petitioner further prays, "that the powerful Protector of kings may baffle the open, thwart the hidden, disappoint the designs of all his adversaries, and give him strength to overcome the force or malice of those who may rise up against him, "*that he would be his keeper, giving him the victory over all his enemies.*"

4. The same zeal which directs the

prayer for the warding off dangers from the sovereign *himself*, very properly proceeds to the prosperity of *those* who are *united with him* in his high station, and the tender offices of *domestic* relationship: to His Royal Consort, *our Gracious Queen Charlotte*; to the August Heir to the Throne, *His Royal Highness George Prince of Wales*, and *all the other branches of the illustrious Family*. For these an earnest request is made, that they may be enriched with temporal and spiritual blessings.

5. The *building itself* being thus supported, it is most natural to pray, that the pillars upon which it leans may, at no time, be subject to *decay*.

The Church of Christ hath for its structure the Author himself, and the doctrines he was pleased to deliver to mankind. These are dispensed by the administration of men, who, from the first days of the Apostles, and the immediate followers of Jesus himself, have in succession been set apart by *consecration*, or holy commission,



to the discharge of their priestly office. As these consist of more *exalted* and *inferior* orders, God, with the greatest propriety, is entreated to bestow his gifts of enlightened minds and pure conversation upon all who shall be appointed to publish the glad tidings of salvation among men — “*to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons.*”

With the Chief Governor are intimately connected those to whom he hath thought proper to delegate a portion of his authority, or to admit to the participation of his counsels. *All* who are *thus* dignified, may be supposed to perform the task allotted to them in proportion to their talents, and the strength of their minds.

Is it not, therefore, in the next place, a most *reasonable* subject for prayer, that God would be pleased to confer upon them a measure of his *Spirit*; that *Holy Spirit*, which may guide their hearts by his influence from above, and strengthen their faculties by the supernatural gift of his



inspiration ; that they may, at all times, be supplied with a sufficient capacity to offer advice, and to assist the labours of the Prince, both in the general business of the realm, and the particular regulation of the Church? “ *That he would be pleased to endue the lords of the council, and all the nobility, with grace, wisdom, and understanding.*”

7. But no government can stand in dignity and honour where the *laws* are not *enforced*, and the statutes sanctioned by a *regular execution*. The usefulness and energy of all civil and ecclesiastical establishments depend upon these. It is, therefore, proper to beseech the Almighty Ruler of kingdoms, that his favour may ever accompany those who, for their learning and morality, are elevated to the high rank of administering justice and equity. We, therefore, in the *next* sentence, offer up a petition, that the *magistrates* may be under his peculiar providence, and that God may impart to them a sufficient de-

gree of wisdom, that they may inflict the enacted penalties due to offences, and espouse the cause of oppressed virtue ; that they may stand forth and assert innocence wherever it may be found to be endangered, and give uncorrupt sentence, without partiality, in the cause of truth.

8. Governors in church and state being thus prayed for, whither should attention next be turned, but to *all* who are *subject to*, and *live* with due *obedience* under government ?

In proportion as men comply with the rules and customs of their country, and of the land in which they were born, their misery and happiness is found to arise. Very apposite, therefore, is the prayer, that the Divine help may never be absent from the nation ; that every individual member of the community may *understand* his *duty*, and learn the true spirit of that just and equitable subordination to which he is called ; and that all men may quietly

persevere in the line of necessary distinction, which may contribute to their welfare, as the inhabitants of the earth—  
“*That God would bless and keep all his people.*”

9. But the happiness of a people consists in *mutual agreement*; in the benevolent suggestions of *one mind*, and the soundness of *one heart*; and in a *constant exertion* of every class to preserve the public tranquillity.

Who of us, therefore, will not at all times be ready to present our fervent address to the throne of power, that there may abide among us *unity, peace, and concord*?—that there may be no dissensions of a civil or religious nature; that there may be a general disposition not to disturb each other by quarrels or defamation; that all our actions and words may be directed to harmony of neighbourhood and social good-will.

If the consideration of this petition be not confined merely to *ourselves*, but ex-

tended to *other kingdoms* of the earth, it must be acknowledged to be equally proper. In this sense it must imply the notion, that we all are of the *same human race*, and that we feel for the distresses of such countries as from different causes are subject to the slaughter of the sword, and to the tremendous visitation of war. We pray that the earth may be at rest.

The subject of *General Prayer* being now despatched, respect to the *individual* follows. When a request hath been solemnly made for *all men*, in their *collective* capacity, it is very warrantable to proceed to the situation of Christians as *singly* interested in their *private* concerns.

10. Happiness of mind is the *first*, as it is the *most important* attainment of all men; but where is this seated? what is its principal source? “*The love and fear of God.*” These are the *two* springs which put the machine into its regular motion, and consequently it is a most proper part of supplication, that we may have a just sense

of our inferiority, as created beings, and of that kindness extended to us by the most indulgent Father. That we may conceive a reverential love for him, or, as it stands, “*that he would give us a heart to love him.*”

But as a *just sense* of obligation is best expressed by a conformity of *manners* to a rule prescribed, an *addition* is made to the sentence, that we may, with due awe, respect and comply with all the communications of his imparted will—“*That we may dread him, and live after his commandments.*”

11. The Christian Religion is built upon *faith* in the *coming* and *satisfactory atonement* of a *Redeemer*. Its blessings are offered to, and received by, men as a *kind favour*, to which, from their *sinful nature*, they of *themselves* could have no *claim*. This salvation was the *free gift* of God, who, *himself*, planned the means by which the generations of men might be restored to their original state, as the sons of God.



This is what we mean when we say, “*that we are saved by grace,*” not through any pretensions of our *own*. The assistance also of God, which is variously bestowed upon our minds, is called *his grace*. Without *this* aid, enabling us to *think* and to *act*, we can *do nothing*. How necessary, therefore, is it to apply to the Divine Fountain, from whence the streams of all truth and goodness flow, that they may issue from it into our hearts, and constantly refresh us with the *water*, as it is called, of *regeneration*; that God would give us an *increase* of grace; that the influence of *this* being continually renewed in us we may be in a condition to imbibe *instruction*; to *receive* and to *understand* the law of God; to hear with the *outward ears*, and lay up the divine communications in our inward *breasts*; to banish all arrogance and pride from our thoughts, and so to regulate our affections as to open our *minds*, and, with all the humble simplicity of a lowly temper, to turn our attention to the voice and ad-



monition of him who is our Lawgiver and Judge?—to hear *meekly* his word.

When it is considered what an *infinite* distance is to be found between the *created man* and the *Creator God*, the former *weak* and *perishable*, of to-day only, and of nothing to-morrow ; the latter of *infinite perfection*, *supreme in majesty*, *boundless in goodness*, *justice*, and *truth*, and of *endless duration*, and *eternal existence*; *meekness* towards *him* cannot but be a requisite quality, and most indispensable for acceptance at his feet.

But to “ *receive with meekness the engrafted word*,” is but *one* step to a good life. It must bear *fruit*. The knowledge of God and his laws is then only *real*, and *truly* acquired, when it influences *conduct*. It is its office to guide the desires and passions of the soul, and to impel the believer, if he shall have imbibed the Christian institutions, to engrave them upon his *conscience* ; and, if he understands what the will of the Lord is, to *evidence* his per-

suasion by a course of practice made conformable and obedient to his commandments, to show “that he believes” by his *works*; and, if he has prayed for, and been blessed with, the light from Heaven, to prove that he is *full* of the *Spirit*, by *walking* in it, or, as it runs in the Litany, “*to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.*”

I shall stop here for the present, and explain the remaining petitions upon some other occasion.

In the mean time, may God be pleased to hear all that ye shall thus pray for, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Litany.*

*IN FOUR PARTS.*

—◆—  
PART III.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON III.

---

PHIL. iv. 6.

*In every thing by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known unto God.*

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THE Church of Christ being founded by its heavenly Author upon the principles of the *same benevolence* as moved *him* to leave the realms of glory, and to suffer *the wages of sin* for the recovery of fallen man, there is everywhere to be found in its precepts an injunction to cultivate *love, or charity.*

In conformity to *this spirit of good-will*, when *intercession* has been made in the *Litany* by *every* individual sinner for *himself*, and what relates to his *own private* condition, the mind is consistently turned to the state of *those* who are connected with him in the *same faith.*

1. Our Lord while he was upon earth foretold, and also described by figure,

“ that the society of believers in him should not be uniform ; and that, from different causes, there should be a falling away from the truth.” Agreeable to this, it is a part of our prayers, “ that God would be pleased to *bring back to his fold all who shall have strayed from the right way*, either from their own weakness, or the delusion of other men ;” “ that their *own* infirmity may not keep them in a separation from the family of Christ ; or the *cunning* of *deceivers* entangle their consciences in the wild mistakes of their ill-grounded opinions.”

2. The state of man is represented as *warfare*, and exposed to *trials* and *difficulties*. These proceed from the great adversary, “ *the evil spirit.*” It is most reasonable, therefore, that sinners should beseech their God to *increase* in them day after day such *degrees of strength* as may give them the power to *resist* the assaults of *evil*, and to *preserve* them in their *integrity* ; or, “ *to strengthen such as do stand.*”



But as many must, from the *weakness of their nature*, fall into sin, and, from a *sense of their unworthiness*, require comfort, is it not right to join in a petition that the “*weak-hearted*” may find the *divine aid*; that the *cast down* may be *lifted up*; and so, the snares of our mortal enemy being broken, and all his wiles baffled and disappointed, his power may cease, “and himself be subject to our own dominion;” or, as it is expressed by metaphor, be “*beaten down under our feet?*”

3. The paths of this life are beset with *dangers*. No man can, at all times, walk *surely*. The defence of a *superior power* is, consequently, most expedient: his *arm* to *protect*; his *presence* to *guard*; his *consolation* to *uphold*; must be sources of the greatest confidence to his people when “*perils* shall beset them;” when “*times of difficulty* shall oppress;” when “*affliction* shall cast them down.” *He* it is who should be invoked as a *Saviour*, “*in danger, necessity, and tribulation.*”

4. The existence to which we are called in this world is to be *prolonged* and *rendered comfortable* by the “fruits of labour, and the prosecution of appointed employments.” These often require “*change of place and of country* ;” at one time by *land*, at others by the “*waters of the sea*.” But the *winds* obey the voice of *God* ; and the length of a distant way is often made most hazardous by different obstructions. Goodwill to our neighbours, then, very consistently requires *this* service of our lips ; that we should recommend them to the care and disposal of the Divine Providence, whether they journey by “*land or by water*.” There are also *other* dangerous situations to which the human race are exposed, of a *domestic* kind ; such as the *sorrow of a woman in her travail* ; the *bed of sickness* ; the *helpless state of infancy* ; the *horrors of confinement under bonds and imprisonment*. Who among us can say but that it is a *pleasing* subject of our duty to ask, “that *God* will relieve a *woman* under the pangs

of her *delivery* ; the *wants* and *weakness* of *young children* ; the *infirm* and *diseased* in their *torture* ; the *tears* and *anguish* of those who are fast bound in the misery of *prisoners* and *captives* ? ”

5. There is no wretchedness, in general, so great as that of “ *orphans*,” who are left to bewail the absence of, and to regret the support they are taught by *nature* and the ties of *affection* to expect from, their *parents*. When this sad calamity hath been brought upon a family, and infants are left behind, *perhaps* without *any arm* to defend them, *certainly* without the *tenderness of a father or mother* to comfort them, what expressions can justly describe the sorrow of a home ?

Of the same aggravated distress is the forlorn condition of a “ *wife*,” when disease shall have consumed, or accident cut asunder, the thread of a *husband's* life. *Here* also, especially among the *poor*, is felt the change of joy to bitterness, of competency to want.

To a woman in *this* trouble arises the remembrance of all her former comforts, and the gloomy prospect also of *solitary* at least, if not *painful, days* to come. These *two* afflictions are so *oppressive* that the sufferers are said to be under the immediate *eye of God*. He is the God of the “*fatherless* and the *widow*.” There is no one here present but must feel the propriety of addressing the Father of Consolations, “that, in his mercy, he would listen to the cries of *children*,” deprived by his good pleasure of their earthly protectors, and give them the means of sustaining their *minds* and *bodies*. Equally great is the call of the “*widow*” upon our compassion; and with *her* all who have lost their *friends*, and are destitute of a *guardian* to defend them; “the *desolate and oppressed*.”

6. The whole race of men are *sinner*s; they are, in *some respect* or *other*, offenders against the divine law, and, consequently, amenable to punishment. Christian charity

commands the servants of their Master in Heaven, *who went about doing good*, to commend all who have sinned in their *intercessions* to the *forgiveness of God*; that he would be pleased to turn away his displeasure from the creatures whom he made; to bear with their iniquities; to avert his judgments; and to remove from them the severity of his wrath; in *whatever country* they may *dwell*; *whatever religion* they may *profess*; in *whatever rank* they may be *placed*; in *whatever situation* they may be *found*—“*that he may have mercy upon all men.*”

7. The doctrines of Jesus suffer not the minds of *his followers* to be confined within the narrow bounds of praying for *those* who wish us *good*; but as human life is mixed with tempers of the most opposite kind, for *those also* who wish us *evil*; “*Bless them,*” says our Lord, “*who curse you; love your enemies, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you.*” In strict obedience to *this* injunction, as there



are *few* who are not *injured* by others ; whose *good name* is not diminished by *slander* ; whose *pious actions* are not attempted to be lessened by the malevolence of *defamation* ; a contrary practice is enjoined by the Church, that we should beg of God to give us a *better* mind, to pardon even *those* who *reproach* us, and to open their understandings, that they may see their *own wickedness*, and find reason to *retract* their calumny ; “ *that he would turn their hearts.*”

8. All the inhabitants of the earth are of *perishable* bodies, and require “ *subsistence*” from day to day. The Author of us all provided a remedy for this infirmity, and his gifts are constantly supplied by the fruitfulness of the earth. The bosom of this receives *seed*, or whatever is to grow, for the *use* and *service* of *man*. But, besides the usual fruitfulness of the ground, the food of all depends upon the *seasons* to bring it to *perfection*. When *these* shall either *favour* or *prove unkind*, the blessings derived from the fields are



comparatively *greater* or *less*; and experience shows to every one that the *rain from Heaven* to *water*, and the *heat of the sun* to *ripen*, contribute by their temperament to the proper growth of the harvest. Most *wisely*, therefore, after all our prayers for the *peace* of our *minds*, is added this for the *continuance* of *health* to our *bodies*: that it may please the Almighty to bestow upon the work of our hands an *increase* of produce from the land, which is *cultivated*, and bring all its *crops* to their *maturity*; that he would so *assist* them with his *care*, that at the *proper season* we may *reap*, *gather* into *barns*, and *use* them for the *nourishment* of our *limbs*, and the *preservation* of our *lives*; “*that in due time we may enjoy them.*”

9. In the *last* sentence, since the blessings we in this manner pray for must come down from *above*, and of *free gift* from the *Author*, we present ourselves before God in humble supplication, that we may not be found *entirely unworthy* of his fa-

vour ; that for this purpose he will raise in us a just sense of our *sinful* state, and lead us to *amendment of life* ; that upon our *contrition* he will *overlook* our past transgressions, *pardon* what we have *done*—"our *sins* ;" and *remit* the punishment due for the *omission* of what we *ought to have done*—*negligences and ignorances* : and lastly, that he will draw us off from our former conversation, by enlightening our understandings, and disposing us, by the help of *his Spirit*, to *correct* our *manners* according to his commandments ; or, " *to amend our lives according to his holy word.*"

The whole ends with a fervent application to the *merits* of the *great Redeemer*, for the *efficacy* and *success* of all our petitions. As there is *no means* by which Christians can present the words of their mouth, and the meditation of their hearts, but through a *mediation*, with singular propriety we commend ourselves to God, *through his Son Jesus Christ*, "the Lamb who was slain."

AN EXPLANATION

OF

*The Litany.*

*IN FOUR PARTS.*

—◆—  
PART IV.

—◆—  
A SERMON.



## SERMON IV.

---

PHIL. iv. 6.

*In every thing by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.*

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HAVING given as *full* an explanation of that comprehensive form of *deprecation* and *intercession* (the *Litany*) as the nature of these Discourses will reasonably allow, and pointed out to this congregation the *meaning* of *each* sentence, in its *distinct* design, in order that so *material* a part of the Church Service may make its due impression upon your minds, I shall add a *Summary* of what has been *already* offered to your consideration.

My trust is, that having received a *particular illustration* of the *individual parts*, ye will suffer the *whole*, when taken together in a *general* way, to find a more

*ready* place in your *hearts*, and to *influence* your *devotions*.

There can be but *little use* in the *explanation* of the *Litany*, if the *parts* attempted to be *illustrated* are not *referred* to by *hearers*; *my endeavours* to *instruct* can give but *little improvement* if the *attentive eye* and *mind* do not compare the *explanation* with the *original*.

In the *first* place, the *sinner* (for the *Litany* presupposes *all* who *thus prostrate* themselves, and make use of *such a form of prayer*, to be of *that* description) offers up the address of his lips to the *Creator of all things*; *first*, under the *threefold* character of the *Godhead*; and *then* as it is concentrated in *unity*.

2. That the *guilt* attached to him by *inheritance* may not obstruct the success of his petitions, he implores *pardon* for the *sins of himself* and of *those* from whom he was descended by *generation*. For though *punishment* be the *necessary* act of *justice*, he beseeches the *Judge*, that the *wrath*



hereby kindled may not *burn*, and not be quenched ; but that *compassion* may support the *afflicted*, and the fury of anger by time be extinguished—" *Be not angry with me,*" says he, "*for ever.*"

3. After this *preparatory exordium*, designed as a means of obtaining the merciful ear of God, he proceeds to the *object* of his humiliation ; and, as most natural, expresses a *desire* to be *free* from the different *troubles* and *calamities* of this *lower world*. As these take their rise from *different causes*, and are either of a *temporal* or *spiritual* kind ; as they either affect the *health* of the *body*, or the *quiet* of the *mind* ; as they proceed from the *thoughts of the heart* ; *intercourse with other men*, or the *casual convulsions* in the system of nature ; as they sometimes arise from *disease* and *infirmity*, or from accidents which no human foresight can prevent, or turn from their course ; the sinner deprecates the falling of these upon *his own head*, and invokes a favourable *interference* in all

perils, *bodily* and *ghostly*, that *he* may *escape*.

4. Conscious, however, that *prayer* can be by no other means acceptable than by a *mediation*, knowing that the great Advocate for man, Christ Jesus, alone can commend to his Father the words of the suppliant, he is careful not to pass by *this* flattering hope; he *leans*, as he *ought*, upon that *rock of safety* which may support his feet from falling; and therefore presents the meditations of his heart in the name of his *great Intercessor*. Thus to show that he understands the *value* of the *atonement* made for sinful man, and the *importance* of every part in his high *character* while he remained upon *earth*, he enumerates *all* and *every part* of that appearance which was made in the *flesh*, that the Son of God might become a *Redeemer*.

5. And that the goodness in averting evils may not continue for a *single day* only, but remain at hand to help in the several seasons of necessity, the sinner

proceeds, having gained a degree of *confidence* in prayer from appealing to the *merits* of the *Mediator*, to implore the benign intervention of a kind *Providence* in the various conditions of his *earthly pilgrimage*; and when *that* shall be brought to its *end*, and the terms of his existence being *completed*, he is to yield to the *first curse* entailed upon him by his *birth*, to beg that the *same defence* may be extended to him when he is to return to the dust of the ground; nor *then* only; but when the trumpet shall have sounded, and the grave sent forth the dead; when all who have slept shall arise, and the tribunal summon them to answer for the works recorded in the Book of Life, he may *stand* under the *shadow of his wing* without dismay.

2dly. In the *next* division of the sentences which compose this *most instructive part* of the Church service, the scene is, as it were, *changed*, and the *mode* of the address is *altered*, as I have remarked to you before, from *deprecation* to *interces-*

sion ; or, from the *turning away* of evils, to the *granting* what may be *profitable* and *good*.

In the explanation of *this* part, I endeavoured to draw your observation to the *regular manner* in which *one* point arose upon the *other* ; and to show, that there was the *most proper connexion* between the *individual* objects of the interceding sinner.

1. With this view I stated, that it was the *first* and *natural* wish of a *true believer*, that the *Church*, which offered to him remission of sins, might continue to flourish throughout the world ; that all men, who might be converted to the faith of Christ, might feel the *influence* of its *power*, and inherit its *blessings*.

2. From *this* I proceeded to hold forth to you, in a prominent way, the *connected* duty of praying for the *life, safety*, and *happiness* of that *supreme person*, under whose authority the building of Christianity is supported in *these* kingdoms ; and of *those* also who are united with him under

the same faith, in the bonds of *domestic relation*.

3. As partaking with the *head* of this important concern, I *then* showed the necessity of offering a petition for *all* who are in *high authority*; and *principally* the administrators of *that worship* which was founded upon the doctrines of the Gospel, and hath continued, in some form or other, from the days of Christ and his Apostles.

With *these*, as tending to the *same* end, are joined all who are admitted to the *counsels* of the *king*, and such as are appointed to administer *justice*, for the *correction* of *vice* and *support* of *virtue*.

4. In the *next* place, I called your attention to *another* division of the Litany—*intercession* for *all* who live in *the belief* of *Christ* and under *governments*, that they may be at *peace* among *themselves*.

This being done, I said, we naturally fall into thoughts respecting *ourselves*, that we may have *a reverence* and *love* of *God* and his *statutes*; that we may *grow in*



*grace*, and encourage in our hearts the influence of the *Holy Ghost*; that all who have *strayed* from the true faith, may *return* from apostacy; “that the *wavering* may be *supported*, and triumph over the arts of the evil spirit.”

5. The *distresses* of our *fellow-creatures* are the next object of our intercession; and *here* we bring together the sufferings of men in their various conditions, whether they be exposed to the dangers of *hazardous enterprises*, *poverty*, or *afflictions*; whether they be occupied in *business*, which calls them away by *long* and *painful journeys*, or *voyages* from their *own country*; whether *sorrows* are coming from women in their travail; “*pains* on the bed of *sickness*,” “*helplessness* upon the *infant state*,” or “*despair* upon those who are *bound* in *misery and iron*.”

6. The *most* wretched of all conditions was, of course, not passed by;—“the *tear* of *her* who bewails a *husband*, or the *cry* of *him* who has *lost* his *father*, as well as



the general mass of men, under the forlorn despondency of the *forsaken*."

7. Add to these, from a just observation made upon the manners of men, and the *sinfulness*, either *entailed upon* them, or acquired by their *own habits*, the general hope, that "God will be merciful in his dealings with the whole race of mankind."

8. To *these*, when we hope *to be forgiven ourselves*, is very aptly subjoined a desire, that we may be *ready to forgive* the trespasses of *other* men; "that of whatever nature their malice may be, it may find a pardoning disposition in *ourselves*."

9. The two *last* sentences are confined to the care of our *bodies*, and the *peace* of our *souls*. A humble entreaty is made, that, as our *frame* is liable to *decay*, it may be strengthened by the regular produce of the *earth*; and, as our *minds* are *weak* and *frail*, they may be daily assisted by the *Divine Spirit*, which may admonish them, neither *wilfully* to *commit sin*, nor *carelessly* to *disregard* the duties of Christ's religion,

which may teach them “to *retract* their *errors*,” and “to *seek* God again by amendment of life.”

The whole compendium being *thus* despatched, the sinner most obviously returns to the *foundation* of all his *hopes*, and concludes both his *deprecation* and *intercession* with a most earnest appeal to the *Mediator* between God and man for his *prevailing name*. Hence, in the fulness of his heart, he *repeats* his trust in the *blood of him* who died for sin, and prays, that, through *his merits*, God, in his *justice* towards him, will remember his *mercy*, *loving-kindness*, and *forbearance*; that, as he is *Lord of all*, he will have *compassion* upon all.

In *this* manner, as well *generally* as *circumstantially*, I have made an endeavour to hold forth to your observation the *Litany* itself, and *all its parts*. My *only* view has been to open your understandings, if it should *so* have happened, that the *meaning* and *connexion* of the several sentences

have escaped your *immediate attention*, or, from *familiar usage*, left too *weak* an impression upon your hearts.

It will in *this*, as well as all *other* attempts to explain the *excellent tenets* of our Church, be a *sufficient* recompense for the employment of *my* time, if I shall appear to you to speak the *truth*, and assist you in the obtaining a *knowledge* of *such* things as may properly direct your *worship here*, and recommend you, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to the everlasting benediction of God himself *hereafter*. Amen.



A  
SHORT TREATISE  
ON THE  
REQUISITES FOR CONFIRMATION,  
WITH  
AN INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION  
ON THE  
SACRAMENT;

DRAWN UP FOR THE USE OF THE AUTHOR'S PRIVATE PUPILS.





## A TREATISE, &c.

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It was a practice in the Jewish church for all its young members, at the age of twelve years, personally to appear in the temple at Jerusalem, and, in the presence of the congregation, to take upon themselves the promises, made in their name at their *circumcision*, to obey the law of Moses. After which, the sponsors, or those who were sureties at their initiation to Judaism, were considered as discharged from their duty.

The Christian church, being built upon the Jewish, hath adopted the same plan; especially as those who constitute a great part of its society are generally introduced into it at a very early age, before they can be supposed to have any notion of the solemn vows, which were made in their names, as the new disciples of Christ.

This taking upon themselves the obligations required at first of the representatives is called *Confirmation*, or the ratifying in their own persons what was engaged for them by their Godfathers and Godmothers.

The ceremony of Confirmation appears to have been early introduced by the Apostles themselves. For when the Samaritans were baptized by Philip, they sent Peter and John *to lay hands on them*. St. Paul also confirmed the Ephesians after their conversion “by laying on of hands.”

From hence this conclusion is drawn, that their new character, as believers in Christ, was not considered as complete, till the Apostles themselves had, by an outward sign, conferred upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For we read, that *this* accompanied the blessing given by the Apostles,—“The Holy Ghost came upon them,” or they were on a sudden enlightened by an inspiration from Heaven.

This wonderful and instantaneous gift of

the Holy Ghost, when the Church was sufficiently established, ceased, as no longer necessary. The ordinary graces, or virtuous habits of mind, took place of the extraordinary illuminations.

The ceremony of Confirmation hath therefore remained among the successors of the Apostles, not as a means of conferring the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, but with a view to prepare the hearts of Christian children for the receiving of its ordinary graces or good dispositions.

And what can be more proper, or better suited to this purpose, than a rite which more immediately brings to the thoughts of the young (at an age when the passions are beginning to exert their influence, and they are going forth into the business and cares of the world) their situation as the disciples of Christ; and reminds them upon what terms alone they can call themselves the children of God, or the objects of their Redeemer's atonement.

Before this hath been duly considered

by them, the name of Christian, which they bear, hath been the effect of accident only ; or as they have been born in a country where the religion of Christ is professed. When they shall have made themselves sufficiently acquainted with the conditions of the covenant, and, after a full and serious reflection, are desirous to continue under the character of Christians, then for the first time have they a right to their name.

This observation I may apply to you who are now called by your Church to a ratification of your baptismal vow. That you are called Christians is to be referred to these two causes, viz. That you have been born in a land where Christianity is professed ; and of parents who wished that you should be brought up in the same faith :— at a very early age you were initiated into the general society of Christians ; and had a name given you expressive of the new character you then assumed. To this time, therefore, you have had no other title to your Christian profession than what

you have derived from your parents or country.

The Church, however (to which you belong), is not satisfied with this accidental mark ; it requires that all who are of its persuasion should give a more significant proof that they are in mind what they profess in word ; and therefore at an age when reason is supposed to have its power over the mind, calls upon its young members to review the promises given when they were first baptized ; and in a public manner to acknowledge themselves bound to believe and to do what the doctrines of the Christian faith require. After this their character may be said to begin.

This open acknowledgment of the baptismal vow is once only to be made. For, as the ceremony of baptism is once performed, and no more, so the avowal of your baptism is once only required ; or confirmation (which is nothing more than a ratification of the vow) can be but once necessary. They, therefore, who wish this



ceremony to be repeated, seem not to have sufficiently considered the design of its institution.

The duties of a Christian consist in a belief of the great Author of the religion himself—Jesus Christ; a knowledge of the service he requires; and a resolution to perform it all the days of his life.

Jesus Christ was the only-begotten Son of God, who, having existed from all eternity with the Father, in the same divine nature, came down from his seat in Heaven, both to make atonement by his blood for the sins of mankind, and to abolish the power and dominion of satan. As the design, therefore, of his coming was to destroy the works of the devil, a renouncing of him and his works is one of the requisitions of the Gospel; and therefore this stands as the first promise given by all sponsors at the baptism of children—"They are to renounce the devil and all his works." It is obvious to remark, that when these vows are taken upon Christians in their own



persons at their confirmation, the same must continue the first principle of their duty.

“To renounce the devil,” is to abstain from, and to abhor, those sinful gratifications which he, as the father of all wickedness, shall at any time suggest.

By the devil, *i. e.* the *accuser* of men to God, derived from a Greek word signifying an *accuser* or *reviler*, we mean that evil spirit who, in consequence of his rebellion, was cast forth from the mansions of Heaven ; and, being condemned to a perpetual exclusion from that seat of happiness, has made it his great object to involve man, since his first creation, in the same misery.

As nothing is so likely to prevail upon us to accept the poisonous cup which he offers under the mask of pleasure, as the idleness of a vain and voluptuous life ; we are required to disclaim the pomps and vanities of the world, the empty gratifications of sin, that are recommended by the vicious part of mankind. And, as a wicked life

(though it may be confirmed by an imitation of bad examples) has its rise in the heart, and the encouragement of evil thoughts, we are now directed to check the desires of the flesh, or to resist the solicitations of passions—a compliance with which may lead us into misery.

After this, an assent is required to the Articles of the Christian Faith, or the compendium of religion, which we, of the Protestant Church,\* have established as the rule of our faith; and which is called (not so much from any certainty that the Apostles drew it up, as that it contains the Apostolical doctrines) the Creed.

This consists of three principal parts, containing, in the first place, what we believe concerning the great author of the universe—God—and his attributes: secondly, concerning his Son Jesus, his birth, death,

\* Protestants were so denominated from the Protest entered into by the Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and other members of the Diet held at Spires, April 19, A. D. 1529, against the enemies of Luther, respecting the holding a general council.

resurrection, and ascension into Heaven : thirdly, concerning the Holy Ghost and his offices ; to which are subjoined other doctrines as matters of belief ; though the most ancient Creeds went no further than a declaration of faith, in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—such as the *holy Catholic Church*, or the universal society of holy men, consisting both of those who now are, or are gone before us, and of those who are yet to come : *the Communion of Saints*, or the fellowship of holy persons with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost : *the Forgiveness of Sins*, or the remission of punishment due to sin through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ : *the Resurrection of the Body*, or the rising again of all men in the same bodies ; those of the faithful to be glorified, of the wicked to be capable of everlasting punishment : *the Life Everlasting*, or a state of happiness or misery to come, according to the good or evil actions of men in their present existence.

The next thing promised at our baptism

is this, that we will keep God's commandments ; or that we will do our best endeavours, the grace of God assisting us, to perform his will.

This will of God is delivered in what we commonly call the Ten Commandments ; which, though they were given by God to the Jews, are binding to Christians ; for Jesus “ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law.”

These Commandments contain our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbour. They are divided into two tables ; the first ends with that which concerns the sabbath ; the second begins with that which requires us to honour our parents. One general remark may be made upon them all : That when one thing is required, its contrary is forbidden, and *vice versâ*.

After this follows in the Catechism a kind of compendium of duty, according to the spirit of the commandments, both to the Deity, and to all mankind. These are the particulars required of our God-



fathers and Godmothers in our names at our baptism. To these are subjoined the means of receiving the grace of God for the performance of them—*Prayer*.

Prayer is a calling upon God for his gracious assistance for the attainment of good, and prevention of evil.

As no form can be so proper or comprehensive as that which Jesus appointed for the use of his disciples; the Church directs its members at all times to apply to their Maker in the Lord's prayer.

This consists of three parts; 1. An invocation or preface; *Our Father which art in Heaven*. 2. In petitions respecting the glory of God; *Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven*. 3. Our own particular wants; *Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. A doxology, or conclusion to the glory of God; *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*;—which is designed to

remind us that all we pray for and all we do is to be directed to one end—"The Glory of God."\*

The latter part of the Church Catechism teaches by what other means the grace of God is conveyed to us ; viz. The worthy partaking of the Holy Sacraments.

The Sacraments are two—*Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*.

To constitute a Sacrament there must be an outward sign of an inward grace ; a divine institution, the means to confer the gift, and a pledge or assurance of it.

These as it were component parts are to be found in those two only which we call Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord. The five, therefore, added by the Church of Rome, *Confirmation*, *Penance*, *Extreme Unction*, *Matrimony*, and *Ordination*, as failing in the essential parts, cannot be admitted.

Baptism is a Sacrament, because it has an outward sign (water) of an inward grace (regeneration), an appointment from

\* The Prayer is ended by one word, Amen, which expresses an assent to all things which are prayed for. It is properly a Greek word, which signifies *truly* or *verily*.



Jesus himself; “ Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; ” the means of conferring grace.— For Baptism is to regenerate us, John iii. 5.

The emblem, Water (as used by all nations, and even by Heathens, as a token of purity), signifies our spiritual cleansing by the blood of Christ. As our bodies are washed from their pollutions by water, so are our souls purified by the blood of Jesus. It is therefore necessary to the administration of this Sacrament.

The inward and spiritual grace exhibited in this Sacrament is a restoration from the fallen state (the penalty of Adam’s transgression) to the favour of God by the death of the Redeemer.

The preparation for Baptism is repentance and faith ; a renouncing of sin, and a belief in the truth of the Christian religion.

As these cannot (though required in all who are baptized) be expected from children, sponsors engage to the Church that,

at the years of discretion, those whom they represent shall believe and repent.

That children should, under this promise, be admitted to Baptism is agreeable to the Jewish law, by which children were received into the covenant at eight days old by the ceremony of Circumcision.

The Lord's Supper is also most truly a Sacrament ; as it exhibits a sign (bread and wine) of an inward grace (the redemption of the world), and was instituted by Christ himself a short time before his passion into the place of the Paschal supper among the Jews. Its design was this ; viz. that all mankind in succeeding ages might have in this Sacrament a memorial or lively representation of his death.

The signs in this Sacrament (bread and wine) are emblems of the breaking of the body, and the pouring out of the blood, of Christ. These are eat and drunk (not as the Romanists teach in their doctrine of transubstantiation, as actually converted into the very body and blood of

the Saviour), but merely as figures and tokens.

The thing signified by these emblems is the sacrifice of Christ ; which to the faithful is as efficacious in the representation only, as if the body of him was really again broken and the blood poured out.

The benefits arising from this Sacrament are these ; the giving us at all times the comfortable assurance that our redemption is accomplished ; and thereby creating in us a joyful confidence that we shall be partakers of his atonement. This persuasion carries us on through all the difficulties of life, and encourages us to resist all such temptations to sin as may interrupt the course of our duty.

This Sacrament (which is administered only to those who are of a riper age, and therefore supposed to have the power of exercising their reason) is not to be approached without a due care and attention.

In the celebration of this ordinance we declare ourselves the disciples of Christ.

But to be the true followers of him we must forsake the path of sin. Whether we be thus disposed, or have actually renounced a life of wickedness, is to be the subject of frequent inquiry. Without self-examination there can be no true repentance; and without repentance our approaching the Supper of our Lord is little less than mockery.

The Church requires that all its members should first ratify the vows of their Baptism before they become partakers of the Lord's table. If, however, it should so happen that from circumstances the rite of confirmation should have been omitted, it allows those who have made themselves acquainted with the Christian faith to communicate publicly at the Lord's table, though they shall not have publicly confirmed the obligations of Baptism.

I have in this brief manner endeavoured to explain the Church Catechism as preparatory to your confirmation, and hope some not unuseful knowledge may arise

from it to any of you who shall have given it attention. As you are called upon at this time to take upon yourselves the promises given by your sponsors, “that you should become the servants and soldiers of Christ,” I think it my duty to exhort you to enlist under his banner, and to resolve by the grace of God (i. e. the free favour of his spirit, to be obtained by prayer and a right use of the gift) to keep his commandments; for I must add upon this alone depends your salvation.

At this time the blessings of the Gospel are offered to you; if you put them from you you will have yourselves only to accuse. That you, therefore, may walk worthy of your calling, let me recommend it to you to apply to God by constant prayer; and that you may be in less danger of miscarrying, to cultivate those principles which may teach you to pass your lives in sobriety and virtue.





AN  
INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION  
ON THE  
SACRAMENT.

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ALL societies of men, whether religious or civil, have been connected together by certain forms, and those who have laid claim to their advantages have been bound by some covenant or mode of obligation.

Thus the Roman soldiers took an oath of service and obedience to their commander ; by this they were engaged not to forsake his standard, nor desert their post in the time of danger.

This obligation was expressed by a word in their language (*Sacramentum*) translated by the moderns Sacrament or Oath.

The same expression having the same sense to convey, is made use of by the society of Christians to signify that bond

by which they are held together, and under which they are to perform a duty of obedience to the Author of their religion.

There are two lights in which mankind are to consider themselves ; first, as made by a great Creator ; and secondly, redeemed by a Saviour.

1. The former knowledge is communicated to them by their own consciences, by the works of the Creator so evident in all parts of the world, and by the acknowledgment of ages.

2. The latter is drawn from Revelation.

Revelation is the will of that Creator made known to his creatures at different times, and in different manners.

This Revelation is continued to man by record ; which, if it be supported by authenticity, must be believed in as containing Truth.

The book called the Bible is that record ; the proof of its authenticity is its antiquity and the reception it has met with in different ages. Had there been reason to sup-

pose that it was a forgery at the time it was written, it would have been then disputed ; and in aftertimes, from evidences collected by learning and argument, been confuted. No such rejection from these grounds has taken place ; consequently it is confided in as a treasure of real communication.

There is no method by which the knowledge of things which have passed in antecedent times can be delivered down from generation to generation among men, but history. This rests upon credibility, credibility upon testimony. If the Bible hath this authority for its support, it is at least equal to any other book, and claims even upon that ground only the belief of its readers.

Of this book Moses was the principal author ; and in the five first books called the *Pentateuch* he gave an account, to the nation over which he presided as the law-giver, of the first formation and peopling of the world ; and (what was connected

with that people as the Chosen of God) of the preservation of the true worship and belief in a God, by a succession of descendants in a peculiar family.

The history given by him of the creation was designed to refute all the wild and extravagant notions of the cause of all things seen in the visible world, which, from the corruptions of tradition, had prevailed in the idolatrous countries.

After he had described the manner by which the heaven and the earth were made, he proceeds to speak of the first inhabitant, Man, who was placed upon the latter. He describes his state, and the terms of that state ; his disobedience to his Maker, and his fall ; he mentions the cause of that fall,—a yielding to temptation. He adds what that temptation was, and who was the author of it. In the first place, the prospect of forbidden knowledge ; in the latter, an animal made by a malevolent being, the vehicle of mischief by transgression. He does not proceed to give any particular

account of the nature of that being who was thus the author of disobedience and its punishment; little has been communicated upon this subject, as totally unnecessary, in all probability, for man to know, and of too mysterious a nature for his limited powers to comprehend. All that can be collected upon this wonderful and incomprehensible doctrine is from scattered parts of subsequent writers; such as St. Peter and St. John, from whom it may be understood, that a being of an order superior to man, and a spirit, moved others of the same order to an act of rebellion against the Supreme Being; and that he was cast with them from a high rank of glory into a place of punishment for his offence.

What that punishment is, or where endured, is at present unknown; nor is it material for any to understand. An enemy to God, he became an enemy to his works; and as the highest proof he could give of his opposition to the will of his superior,



he determined to destroy in his sight what had come forth by creation so perfect from his hands,—the new-made man. To this is to be ascribed the first contrivance of the fall and its ultimate success. It is not for man to search into the counsels of God, nor to inquire for what wise reasons the unhappy issue of that temptation was allowed. It is only to be lamented in its consequences ; and the proneness of all the descendants of the first man to sin is a proof that such bad success did attend that temptation.

I have dwelt thus long upon this particular subject, as I consider it the groundwork of the necessity there was that there should be a redemption, or a restoration, of man to that state from which he had fallen, through the Tempter, by a mediation. Unless there be a persuasion that this was necessary, all that is built upon it must vanish into nothing.

This, I hope (allowance being made for the brief manner in which it hath been



stated), being established to your satisfaction, I shall proceed to what Moses further delivered, as a great truth in his history.

The historian, after he had recorded the circumstance of the fall of man, added an express promise given by his Creator, that vengeance should be taken of the evil spirit, who had at first drawn him off from his obedience, and thereby brought upon him misery and punishment. He mentions first of all the general promise, that a Descendant should arise to the sinners in a future age, who should soften the sentence of death (the dreadful penalty of transgression), and obtain dominion over the malign being who first, by his art, brought guilt upon Adam—"The seed of the woman," &c. Gen. iii.

In the course of his history, Moses showed that this promise was kept alive among the children of the first man, from generation to generation; that though wickedness prevailed, and its punishment (the flood) followed, yet that this was renewed;

that as the knowledge of the true God was yet preserved in a small part of the human race, the expectation of the Deliverer, who was to be sent, was preserved also ; that Abraham obtained the renewal of this promise as a reward for his faithfulness, that “ in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.”

The writer afterwards mentions a particular branch of Abraham's family,—the family of Jacob. In the mouth of this man (who was called the *Patriarch*, or the head of the families), he places a prediction respecting the time in which this promise should be accomplished. —“ The sceptre shall not depart,” &c. Gen. xlviii. 9. He also adds the prophecy of Balaam, &c.

Before his own death he foretels that a Prophet (meaning the Messiah) should be raised up to the Hebrews like unto himself.

Thus much for the history of Moses ; from which is to be drawn the certainty of a promise of redemption, in general terms, of a family appointed for the purpose,

and of a period when it should come to pass.

As years went on, and the season more nearly approached when the person who was to bring about the redemption was to appear, holy men were occasionally raised up with the wonderful power of foretelling the very place where this person should be seen, and also the circumstances of his character. These particulars are to be found in the writings of the greater and lesser prophets ; but principally in those of Isaiah, who is therefore called the Evangelical Prophet.

Here ends the Old Testament. It was necessary to say thus much upon the Old ; because, without this, there would be wanting an introduction to the New.

The New Testament contains an account of the accomplishment of those important promises which were made at different times and by different persons in the Old. It gives a history of Jesus, *i.e.* Saviour and Christ, the promised Messiah ; or of Him

in whose person all predictions and figures respecting the Deliverer, so long looked for, were brought to their completion.

This book (claiming the belief of all its readers from the certainty of its testimony) records the first coming into the world of this extraordinary person, and likewise every circumstance respecting his life and doctrines. It also gives a minute detail of events which passed during his continuance upon earth ; and at the particular time when the purpose for which he was made man was to be fulfilled, his death.

That satisfaction was to be made to God by this atonement alone is to be collected from the sentence itself, which was at first pronounced upon Adam ; “ Thou shalt die ; ” and from sacrifices also appointed from the earliest age, and the slaughter of victims in the Jewish worship, which throughout were typical or figurative.

As this then was the great end of our Saviour’s mission, and the earnest to mankind that they should thereby be restored

to that state of favour in which they were originally made, the writers of the Gospel have been particularly exact in recording every minute circumstance which might establish a conviction that he did certainly die.

To commemorate this death, and in this death the redemption of the world, a ceremony hath been appointed, called, by believers in Him, the Eucharist, or thankful remembrance, and the Lord's Supper.

It is very well known that the sense of obligations is soon obliterated from the minds of men, and that ceremonies are of great use in reviving in the heart those necessary impressions which want of attention and the business of the world too often deface.

For this reason the Jews were required every year not merely to celebrate, but to represent under symbols the deliverance of their forefathers from their bondage in Egypt.

Jesus Christ built his religion upon the



Jewish. He also required that those who were delivered by him from a greater captivity, that of Satan and Death, should often exhibit the means by which this was obtained, by an ordinance or outward sign.

For this purpose, on the day preceding his death, he called together those who had been the companions of his life ; and instituted a formal act of remembrance of himself for all he was to suffer, and the benefits which they were to receive.

It was part of the ceremony at the conclusion of the Paschal Feast, for the master of the family to call for a piece of bread and a cup of wine. These he blessed and distributed to the rest of the company, as a mark of friendship and social affection.

The night preceding the death of Christ was the Jewish Passover. He kept that feast with his friends, and embraced the opportunity of establishing in the last part of the ceremony that institution which was to supersede the former rites, and to perpetuate to all ages the remembrance of his



sufferings. He took bread and wine ;— these he declared should thenceforth be regarded as emblems of his body and his blood ; emblems only ; for real flesh and real blood they could not be. They could not (as the Roman Catholics teach) be transubstantiated, *i. e.* so changed from their natural substance as to pass into another. They could be nothing more than a representation.

Under this act the disciples were required to remember their Master ; their Master who was to die for them, and by that death to obtain their redemption.

The disciples who were present were Jews, and consequently well knew that it was not a matter of choice with them, whether they should observe the institution, or treat it with disregard. The celebration of the Passover could not be dispensed with— whoever neglected the ceremonies of that feast was cut off from the people. Hence it must appear that the Eucharist is of perpetual obligation ; and that as Christ insti-

tuted this in remembrance of himself when the Passover was done away ; it must follow that there is as absolute a necessity for compliance with the latter, as during so many ages, for a less cause, there had been for the former. Jesus said in a way of command, “ Do this in remembrance of me ;” and the apostle St. Paul, by using the words “ as oft as ye drink this cup,” implied that the ceremony should be often repeated.

To the necessity of thus conforming to the injunction of the Saviour, is to be added, the manner by which it may be performed. Times and countries vary in their forms ; and modes in all things are adapted to the age in which they are to be done. Thus, in modern times, the particular posture of celebrating the Eucharist is not agreeable to the primitive appointment. But wherever the intention and manner are accompanied with reverence, the inward mind reconciles the outward act.

Next to the manner is to be considered

the immediate design of performing this service. 'This again may be illustrated by reference to the Passover. A Jew in that ordinance did not merely commemorate the redemption from Egyptian slavery ; but at the time of his partaking of the ceremony, supposed that he was then more immediately declaring himself "*one of the people of God,*" who had brought out his forefathers with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. The act was a public declaration that he acknowledged himself to be a Jew.

In celebrating the Christian Passover a similar design is kept in view. The partakers of this communion make the same tacit acknowledgment that they are Christians ; that they are believers in Jesus their master ; and publicly profess that they claim a title to that glorious name by which they are called.

Next in order follow the immediate benefits arising from this institution. Independent of the chief and glorious privilege

that Christians have a right to claim by the sacrifice and death of their Redeemer in another life ; assurance is given, and a sensible persuasion arises in the breast of a true believer, that by a due observance of this rite which was commanded by his Lord, he shall not only obtain the ultimate blessing—Salvation ; but by showing himself the servant of his Master, shall receive in this world from him every aid and support which may be necessary for the discharge of his duty. He is taught to believe that from a regular compliance with this law, he shall be enlightened by the divine grace, *i. e.* by a secret communication of inward power, which may create in his mind worthy dispositions, and arm him against the assaults of evil and the world.

After having in this compendious way considered the necessity of a redemption ; the accomplishment of it ; the manner of commemorating it, as in the Eucharist ; and the blessings resulting from it ; I am naturally led to consider what is the proper

state of mind which Christians ought to bring with them when they are more immediately engaged in this act of religion. This is usually called *Preparation*.

The true preparation is certainly habitual piety, or the encouraging in the mind from the earliest years of life a desire to live in a regular obedience to the law of God. For, in celebrating the Eucharist, an open confession is made, that the partakers of it are the servants of Christ. Two masters cannot be served; and, therefore, he who professes himself a follower of Christ cannot be a slave to the *evil spirit*; to destroy whose dominion the death which he commemorates was undergone.

What is necessary for the happiness of life itself and a fearless expectation of death is the best preparation. This is equally essential for either state. But since, from commerce with the world and the violence of the passions, a deviation from innocence and duty is day by day lamented by all men, stated times of preparation are useful



and expedient. For these have a power to bring the mind back to its proper frame and temper ; they draw it off from negligence on the one hand, and from inconsistent gratifications on the other ; they represent to the heart, that if the feast is to be attended it is highly necessary that every guest should put on the required garment. In short it reminds every christian that to make himself worthy of appearing before his Master, it is an indispensable requisite that he should carry that only in his character which is suitable to his service.

The celebrating the Eucharist is no less an act of gratitude in the upright, than of repentance in the sinner ; and where the latter is sincere, consisting of sorrow for past offences, and a desire of amendment for the days to come ; so gracious is the Master who furnishes this entertainment that he excludes not such from his table.

It may now be asked what are the



causes which indispose the generality of christians from becoming guests at this banquet. These are, in general, *a determined resolution to forsake no vicious course* to which they may have been addicted ; and a misconception of words to be found in Scripture, which speak of the consequences to the unworthy receiver. As to the former, the very design of the Eucharist is a bar of exclusion from the ordinance. No man can presume to appear before his Maker and Saviour as a christian believer who serves other masters, Sin and Satan. To such no answer is to be given. When they shall see their folly, and show repentance, then we trust that, though late, the mercy of God, through the intercession of his Son, will yet be extended to them also.

The Greek word in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, improperly translated *Damnation*, hath been a discouragement to many, and an absolute cause to the ignorant of fear and terror. They have been

affrighted by the term, and therefore turned away from the institution itself. It should, however, be known that St. Paul was addressing those who had such unworthy notions of the Eucharist as to make no distinction between that and an intemperate banquet. He told them that they must be answerable for such conduct ; that they must appear in trial for such an abuse ; and as a proof that he did not mean an eternal exclusion from future happiness, he adds that in consequence of their profanation, troubles of this life were brought upon them, such as disease and death.

The same offence cannot in these days be committed ; and therefore so far is the everlasting *damnation* from being to be dreaded, that even the temporary is not to be expected.

In short, according to my faith, according to my knowledge, according to my trust and confidence, I believe that every

man who endeavours to make himself acquainted with the design of this institution, and to frame his life according to the requisites which it presupposes ; such as belief in the Saviour ; a desire to live as he has commanded ; a sorrowful remembrance of sins committed ; and a wish by the assistance of God, which is to be obtained through the mediation of Christ Jesus, by earnest and constant prayer, to lead a good life, will, at all times, whether by an habitual or actual preparation, be a *worthy partaker* of the Lord's Supper.

Did young men in particular consider what a serious admonition the frequent attendance at the Lord's Supper will give them ; so as to alarm them against the approach of evil, and encourage them in the pursuit of good ; they would not be surprised that it should be recommended to them in the season of their youth ; for this alone is to be the support of their manhood, the alleviation of old age, and

the anchor of confidence in the hour of their death.

That what has been said may have its weight upon your minds, and tend to your peace, both now and hereafter, is the sincere wish of your faithful friend.

THE END.

## ERRATA.

- Page . 9,—12th line, *for* darted, *read* darting.  
—— 81,—15th —— *for* doctrine, *read* nature.  
—— 89,—15th —— *after* blessed lord, *read* describes.  
—— 123,— 4th —— *for* to suffer, *read* suffered.  
—— 125,— 8th —— *for* the soul, *read* his soul.  
—— 149,— 6th —— *for* this, *read* his.







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